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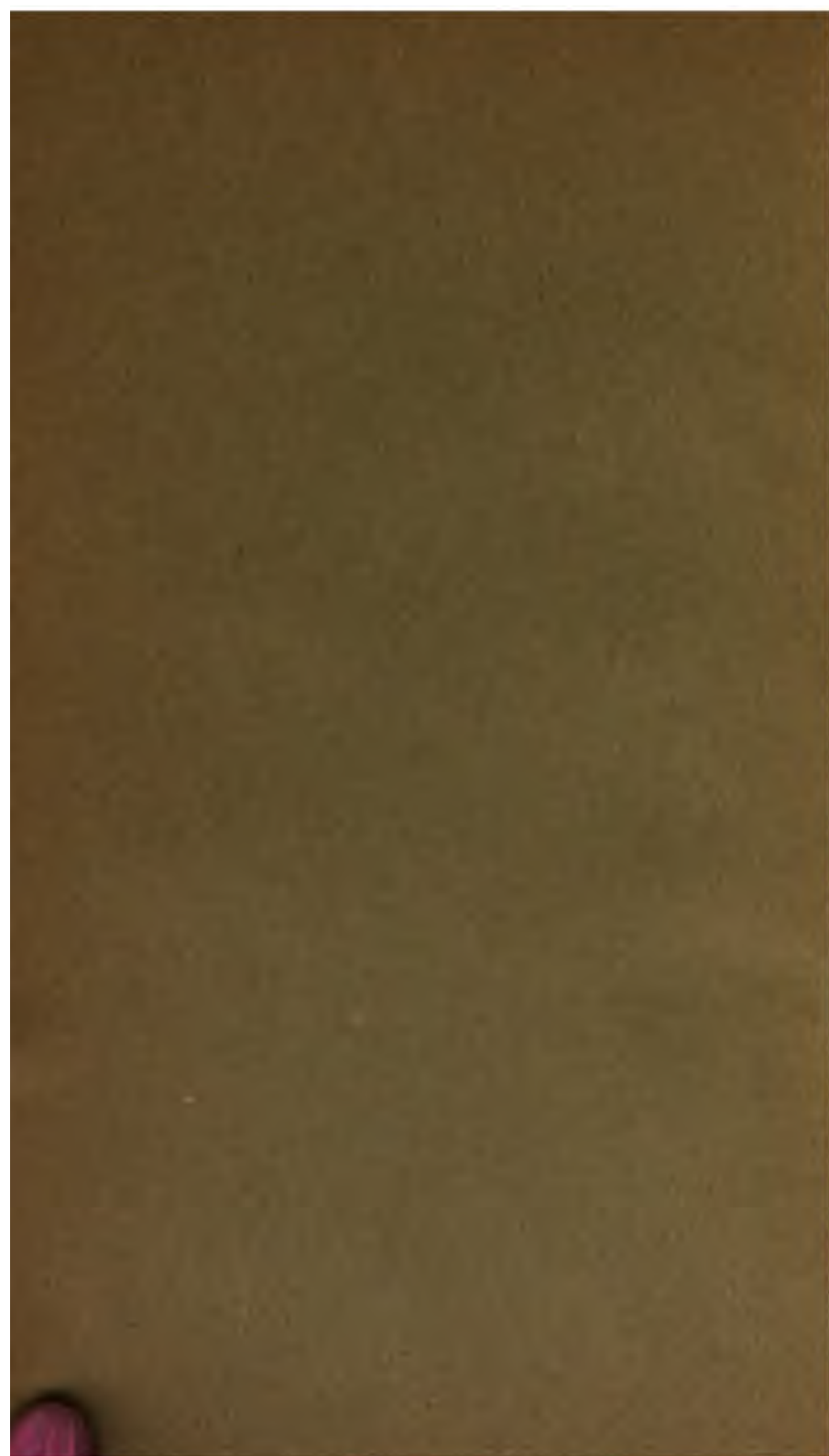
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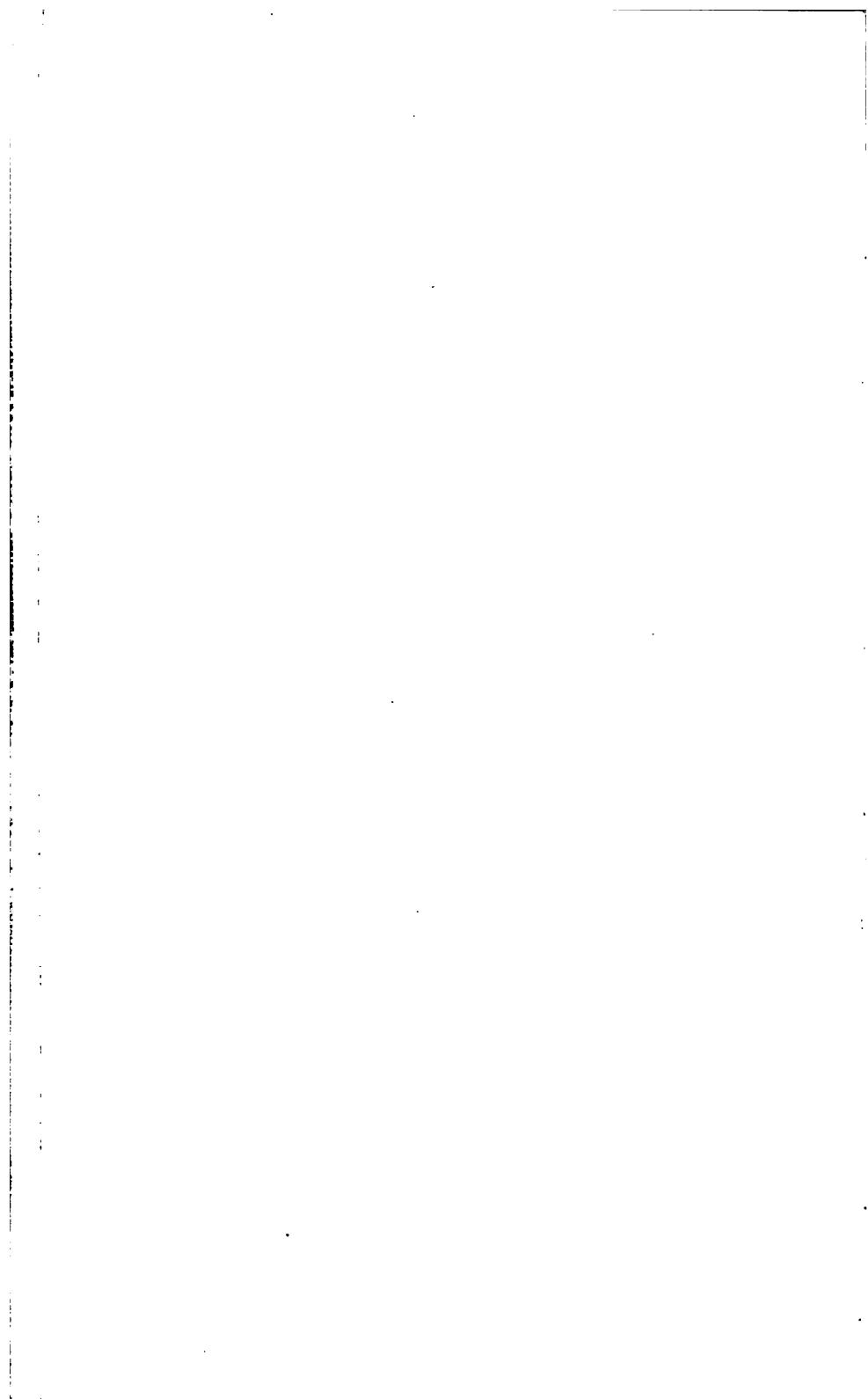


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THE
PROGRESS OF NATIONS

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THE
PROGRESS OF NATIONS

OR

THE PRINCIPLES OF
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR RELATION
TO STATESMANSHIP

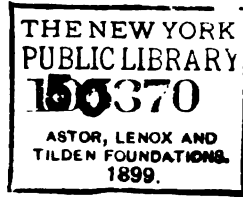
A STUDY IN ANALYTICAL HISTORY

by Edw. F.R.S.

Le passé et le présent sont nos moyens; l'avenir est notre objet—PASCAL

LONDON
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS

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VOLUME

PREFACE. *Chen. 18,*

THIS study is presented with a feeling of unfeigned diffidence to the candour, the indulgence, and the thoughtful attention of the reader ; to his candour, because in scarcely any subject is an author so exposed to ready misapprehension ; to his indulgence, because this effort is always crude, and sometimes perhaps ambitious to solve what is insoluble ; to his thoughtful attention, because in the impossibility of establishing infallible conclusions by the unaided efforts of one solitary inquirer, the only useful function is to propose theses for the thought and the discussion of others.

For this is indeed a subject in whose attack Vico, Bossuet, and Herder failed with a fame for boldness and ill-success, which at once attracts and appals those who are ambitious to follow in their steps. Perhaps the ruin of these new efforts may with theirs help to fill the trench, and over them others may advance to that victory, to which this attempt contributes only by showing the difficulty and the dangers of the assault.

But whatever may be the measure of its failure, do not judge of this effort as if it were hung upon the walls of an exhibition gallery, but of your charity think that you are admitted into the studio of an artist to see the progress of an unfinished work. In one respect, how-

ever, the analogy fails : it may never be that the author, like an artist, can profit by your suggestions. He is dead so far as these matters are concerned. Censure or praise or advice for future guidance would be but that posthumous criticism, which if it reaches them can affect but slightly the spirits of those who feel that it relates to a past state of existence gone never to return.

For if it is due to the reader to let him know something of the author, I will not debar from this cheap privilege those who may have the courtesy to become my readers. I belong to an order into which no one enters till comparatively late in life, and after the years of youth and early manhood have been spent in the most laborious and anxious preparations for the practice of a profession, which unless its members were men of liberal education and extensive and varied attainments would cease to hold that high rank which it now occupies — with so much of public advantage — in our country. Those preparations are not confined, nor indeed do they till late embrace strictly professional study ; for before a man is fit to enter upon even the candidature of the English bar, it is necessary that he should possess a mind refined and disciplined by careful and assiduous culture of the more important intellectual accomplishments.

The study which above all others demands the attention of a person who aspires to become a member of the bar is the study of history. In pursuing that study as a qualification for my profession, I was led to inquiries and researches which have resulted in the composition of this book. Little pleased with its execution,—sometimes doubtful of the soundness of its conclusions,—always certain that if some one would devote himself to this study with less distraction than I could, he might produce

results better worthy the perusal of his readers, I have kept my crude remarks for many years in an uncertain expectation that their publication might be rendered useless by the appearance of some better efforts, or that I might myself have an opportunity of substantially improving them. Neither contingency has happened. I could do no more than alter some occasional passages, where the experience of practical life had corrected the views of a collegiate recluse. I have now neither the wish nor the leisure to return to studies which were never to me anything but a part of education; for I am of the number of those who sympathise not with a recluse entombed by one life-long solitary task, and consider speculative employments prosecuted so exclusively as to debar their devotee from a life of action to be unworthy of a manly citizen; while the pursuits which I have now embraced require the whole and undivided energy of those who would succeed in them, and compel me to relinquish for ever every other form of occupation.

Let the reader then be assured that if a name were affixed he would know no more about the authorship of what he reads than he does when I tell him that the book was written by one who was then fitting himself to be, what he now is, a practising member of the English bar.

Completion and perfection seem the less necessary the more one regards the nature of the subject. In no field of labour may an English author hope for more assistance from his readers, more participation as it were in the toils and labour of discussion, than in any one that borders upon politics. For while the man of science converses as a fellow-worker but to a very small audience, and to the people at large harangues as a professor; while

the poet sings to those who listen to his singing without thought of joining in it ; while the historian of a particular country explains for general knowledge what he by greater research knows better than his readers ; and the metaphysician publishes his deep discussions to select circles who think they have done much if they merely understand them ; it is far otherwise with a subject such as this. In our country every gentleman is more or less of a politician, and a student of general history ; and whoever writes upon matters which elsewhere are the exclusive business of emperors, statesmen, and professors, must be prepared here to find in the bulk of his readers men who have as much knowledge of his subject and have thought as deeply upon it as he who aspires to communicate his thoughts in the shape of a book.

ATHENÆUM :

December, 1860.

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THE
PROGRESS OF NATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY.

*"Γιγνόμενα μὲν καὶ ἀεὶ ἔσόμενα, ἔως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾖ, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ἡ συν-
χαίτερα καὶ τοῖς εἶδεσι διηλλαγμένα, ὥς ἂν ἑκασταὶ αἱ μεταβολαὶ τῶν ξυντυχίων
ἐφιστῶνται."*—THUCYD. iii. 82.*

WHAT are we to consider history — a string of striking episodes, with no other connection but that of time, or the manifestation of a unity of purpose, worked out by a necessary and defined progression? Can we draw out a tree of history, and trace the connection of its parts?

There are probably few thoughtful persons who, when they have closed a book of history, have not asked themselves this question, and have not traced in the leading features of the story which they have been reading a marked resemblance to the biographies, if we may so speak, of other nations. But whether appalled by the vastness of the subject, whether repulsed by a false notion of its inutility, whether influenced by the natural ten-

* Events which have happened, and always will happen so long as the nature of mankind remains the same, albeit varying in form and in degree according to the difference of circumstances in which they are clothed.

dency to postpone the investigation of sciences that admit not of experiment till after those capable of empiric aid have been exhausted, whether terrified by the accusation of impiety ever hanging over a new course of inquiry, whether deterred by the general incuriousness, the thinkers from whom we should have expected some advance in this direction, have been content to observe an inglorious silence, or to record an opinion unsupported by argumentative discussion.

In the midst of such a general barrenness it is consolatory to find four or five persons who have boldly essayed to construct a system of history. The mass of mankind have surveyed their structures and condemned them, but a fame yet surrounds the authors, of the nature of that enjoyed by the architect of a lighthouse on a desperate headland, which the first storm has washed away. Every one admires the audacity and novelty of the attempt, while he laments the errors of the design, or the insufficiency of the execution.

This study does not affect to be the edification of a system, for nothing leads to error by so straight and certain a path as the pomp and pedantry of establishing eternal laws in matters which admit not of experiment. But if certain general principles present themselves as explanatory of well-observed phenomena, are they to be refused consideration? or is it vain to hope that a few luminous traits and settled axioms may give a key to the acts of God by man, which are too often obscured by the acervation of detail, and distorted by the licence of unsystematic conjecture? In all physical nature it is granted that the Deity works by established and fixed principles; in the direction of human events alone this mode of governing has been denied. I do not shrink, therefore, from supposing that there is a method in human affairs by reason of any fear that such an opinion borders on impiety, nor do I deem it a mean or paltry ambition to endeavour to apply to the domain of history some of

those processes which have served to change other wastes and wildernesses into fruitful fields of knowledge. I cannot hope to do more than to mark out some of the broader paths, and in that effort it is no slight consolation sometimes to find oneself upon a track laid down by Aristotle, Montesquieu, Machiavelli, De Tocqueville, and the rest of the illustrious few who have dared to think that history might be the working of a mighty system by means of regular and defined principles. The object, therefore, of this attempt is not to alter present opinions about the details of human events, but to promote a new mode of thinking about history.

It must, however, be always remembered that in applying to social affairs the methods of observation by which natural science has been discovered, we labour under disadvantages which have been fatal to many previous efforts, and it is as well at once boldly to face and state them. Thus the nature of the subject forbids us the hope of attaining rigidity in any of our conclusions. Indeed, I might lay it down as one of the fundamental principles, that undeviating exactness must be expected in nothing that is laid down upon this subject. Three considerations will easily explain how this, which is held to be a necessity in all physical sciences, becomes an impossibility here.

In the first place, we are dealing with man and man's actions, and so long as the exercise of freewill, in however limited a degree, is allowed to us, there must necessarily be that diversity which does not exist in things inanimate, put in motion by the undisturbed agency of eternal laws.

Secondly, the matter with which we are concerned has flashed before the world and passed for ever, and all that is left us is its memory. How much more happy the mathematician, who can safely pack the materials of his rigid reasoning in a portmanteau; the chemist, who, from the little world which is comprised in his laboratory, can discover the laws which operate with the utmost exact-

ness throughout our whole system; or the astronomer, who by ascending a flight of stairs and forbearing a night's rest has the whole vault of heaven spread out before him, the magnificent subject of his inquiries. We have only words—the signs and vague records of former events, in twenty different languages and of twenty different degrees of trustworthiness, and the great drama that is passing before us, the scope and meaning of which we must penetrate as best we may.

Thirdly, there is denied to us the right arm of all discoverers, Experiment. The shrewd mathematician or natural philosopher guesses a truth, and forthwith tests it in a multitude of instances, when, if it never fails, it starts forth an accomplished discovery. The historical or political inquirer may guess as many truths as he has head for, but all that is permitted him beyond that is to collect all particular instances known, and thence infer the general laws, trying, if he can, to reason out their necessity and propriety, and go through, after a humble and halting fashion, the mental process which the Creator may have been supposed to have gone through when he decreed those laws. Our poor inquirer must rest there; he cannot, like the mathematician or natural philosopher, create particular instances, and his supposed general laws may therefore rest occasionally on two or three examples, where it is impossible to render exactly the effects to their true causes. This method, which, under the name of historical induction, has acquired the commendation of the most thoughtful writers of our age, is the only one permitted us to follow in the succeeding pages. Our distribution of causes to effects will of course be confirmed wherever possible by tracing the process, if we may so speak, of causation. And it is chiefly on this, when duly performed, that general views of history must rest their claim to attention.

The absence of rigidity in these inquiries; the want, and indeed impossibility, of obtaining precise definitions; the

looseness of speech which has always hitherto pervaded discussions of this kind,—distress the political student who tries to think with exactness, as much as they perplex the writer who desires to gain belief for his conclusions. We are obliged in our studies to think and speak of abstract ideal forms which, when we look around us on the face of the globe, we can hardly acknowledge to bear a relation to the systems which we see in life and action. The anatomist, who should think that by a few days' work in the dissecting-room he might attain a thorough knowledge of the human species, would not be more mistaken than the political philosopher who, after much speculation in his closet on "Monarchy" or "Democracy," should think himself qualified to prescribe governments for nations, or to administer those that were already established. It is sufficiently clear that the ancients did not escape this fault when they classed the governments with which tradition or their own experience had made them acquainted, under one of three ideal forms:—monarchy, the rule of one;—aristocracy, where the sovereign power was in the hands of the men reputed the best of the state, whether because belonging to a conquering tribe, or for some other reason;—democracy, where it rested in an assembly of the nation, from which no freeman was excluded. Nor did they much relieve the difficulty when they defined the distinct tendencies to degeneracy which might be observed in each of these forms. A monarch, who totally disregarded the good of his subjects, and held no law but his own will, established a tyranny: but the difference between an absolute monarchy exercised for the common good, or administered only for the ruler's interest, depended so entirely on the personal character of the man who occupied the throne, and the very idea of one man being allowed to exercise his will unchecked over thousands, was so distasteful to the free spirit of the Greeks, that they used *μοναρχία* (monarchy), and *τυραννίς* (tyranny), almost as convertible terms. As, too, it was but seldom

that a state could permanently secure the appointment of the really best men to govern it, the power of an aristocracy was liable to be usurped by a clique of unscrupulous adventurers; and the nation which had begun by selecting the best men to be at its head, ended in having for its only distinction the being governed by a gang of a few despots. Oligarchy took the place of aristocracy. Nor was it possible for the Athenians to deny that their favourite form of government was not exempt from a corresponding danger. When the interests of all the individuals of a state coincided, democracy was considered unobjectionable; but whenever the people became split into factions, the majority exercised over the minority the worst of all tyrannies, the tyranny of the mob (*οχλοκρατία*).

This tripartite enumeration, savouring too much of cut and dried politics, and making no allowance for the buoyancy of everchanging governments, which must be perpetually readapted to the genius, temper, and manners of a nation, affords an apt illustration of the peculiarity of these pursuits and their subject. Indeed, if we regard governments in action, the shades are distinguished by so fine a difference, and the variety is so infinite, the very stages of each variety so fleeting, that while we are describing them they change. "*Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo.*" We cannot fix them to any one form. We can but carry away a general idea, round which we must group our recollections of the dissolving series.

The ancients felt the inadequacy of such a distribution to include under any one of their heads the governments of these nations, which had arrived at that stage where more than one social element struggled for pre-eminence. The Spartans had a governing system essentially aristocratical, yet so complicated in its instruments, that it seemed, however incorrectly, to partake the characteristics of more than one of these forms. Polybius complains that he knows not of which of them he was to

consider the constitution of Rome, at the period when he had an opportunity of observing it. "When we contemplate the power of the councils, it seems to be a monarchy; when we attend to the power of the senate, it seems to be an aristocracy; when we attend to the power of the people, we are ready to pronounce it a democracy."

To supply so manifest a deficiency, the Roman statesmen praised, without giving it a distinctive name, a fourth form of government, (such as the schoolmen would have called a "participative mean,") which by a judicious intermixture of the other three should combine their merits, and reject their faults. Cicero* thought it not unworthy of Scipio to admit its superior excellence. Tacitus† delivered it as his judgment, that it could more easily be praised than established, and if ever established was not likely to be durable. It was reserved for Montesquieu‡ to confirm the just anticipation of its excellence, and to point to the government thus praised by the ancients in action in Great Britain. It was reserved for our times to prove that constitutional monarchy has been as durable as glorious.

Though we take our government as the type of its class, can any one say at which moment of our history it became a constitutional monarchy? Was it before the execution of Charles, or before the reign of William III.

* "Itaque quantum quoddam genus reipublicæ maxime probandum esse sentio, quod est ex his quæ prima dixi moderatum et permixtum tribus."—*Cic. De Rep.* lib. i. c. 29.

† "Cunctas nationes et urbes populus aut primores aut singuli regunt, delecta ex his et consociata reipublicæ forma, laudari facilius quam evenire vel si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest."—*Tac. Ann.* iv. 33.

‡ Montesquieu felt the same difficulty as Polybius, for he sometimes calls the government of England a monarchy, sometimes a republic concealed under the form of a monarchy, sometimes simply a republic. Even the author of the "Prince" (*Discorsi*, ch. ii.) condemned the three rigid forms, and commended Lycurgus for his approximation to a government in which king, nobles, commons, should each have their share of power.

that our monarchy deserved to be called constitutional ; and after some of the legislation of our age, does our constitution deserve to be called monarchical ? Again, under which of the four forms can any one, not gifted with an arbitrary power over language, rank the absolute despotisms of the continent, which owe to the obedient presence of a complaisant and paid diet their doubtful promotion to the brevet rank of constitutional monarchies ?

Another difficulty haunts us : no two men agree on the examples which they shall select as the standards — each of its own tribe of governments—but every one takes his chief idea of monarchy or democracy or aristocracy from that specimen with which he happens, from nearness of time or place, to be best acquainted. We are as badly off, therefore, to tell which of the many varieties of a form of government is meant by the general name for that form, as traders were formerly to tell what was an ell when every man measured it from his own arm. We want a monarch to decree what shall be called monarchy, and what aristocracy, as Henry IV. decreed that his subjects should measure their ells from the royal limb.

You are thus early, reader, apprised of the poor and bare furniture of my studio, my meagre and clumsy tools, and the loose and slippery materials upon which I am to operate. If with such appliances anything may be accomplished, others perhaps will take heart and not refuse to labour with me ; if the only result is failure, your charity and fairness will lay that failure the less to my discredit.

If I may adopt an expression from mathematical language, I would here lay down a position in these terms : *The form of government is the dependent, the national character the independent variable.* It is a maxim for which there would have been far more difficulty in gaining credence fifty years ago than I anticipate now, for while the more mechanical statesmen adhere vigorously to the old blunder, those who have combined reflection with

practice have not hesitated to expose it. From the days when Athens was often content, that the only mark of subjugation in a conquered state should be the adoption of democratic institutions, and Sparta was even more completely pacified by the establishment of an oligarchy, to the memorable era when the French republic was anxious to raise around it the Batavian, the Cisalpine, the Helvetic, and the Parthenopeian republics, because they were kindred forms of government, may be traced the frequent repetition of the same error which Great Britain has far from escaped when at great cost and with unhappy success it aided in establishing in Spain, in Portugal, in Belgium, in Greece, and in more than one state of Germany, these mock constitutions—paper-providences, as a king, with more felicity of thought than of situation, called them in a speech from the throne—which every now and then wither away, and demonstrate to the deluded nations the absurdity of transplanting governments.

In a constitution planned and perfected in the closet, even though it may be made to order to fit a particular state, there is always one fault, and there has been in nearly every case a second. The first and invariable fault is the immovability of the structure. The government does not live, but is a dead machine. So long as it is desirable that the national character and sentiments should remain unchanged, there can be no objection to a fixed machine; but men are placed in this dilemma, either the nation must remain in the stage in which it is for ever, a supposition against nature in the limit, though the examples of Sparta and Norway show that a very long duration in one stage under an unchanged government is perfectly possible, or when the social frame on which the machine was to act changes, the machine becomes worthless, and men must resort for another “paper-providence” to the closet of the political philosopher.

Here at once is seen the difference between the English

capable of receiving." In that selection by Solon of the best suited, and not the best as judged by some absolute standard, was shown that wisdom which has justly become proverbial. Now, those wretched schemers who, having to deal with a nation in which centralisation had been completely and irresistibly established, for instance France, thought fit to put upon it a constitution which could not work well without strong local independence, committed that very blunder, by avoiding which Solon earned his fame. Ali Pacha was not worse than this when he sent a messenger to Corfu, to look for a constitution for him.

Instances are unfortunately too abundant of the senseless imposition of a government suited to one stage of national existence upon a nation in another stage. The people in office have taken a precedent off the official file, and taken a wrong one. Modern Athens, Naples in 1820, and Ireland, afford melancholy spectacles, from which we eagerly turn to Norway, where, on its union with Sweden, a constitution was established which, because it embodied the principles already in action, and relied for its good working on no social element that was deficient, has, without "revolution," taken deep root in the affections of the people, and bids fair to last till that apparently distant period when some organic change in the national occupations and character shall advance Norway to a new phase of national existence, to which the present system of government would be inappropriate.

Constitutions, then, cannot be successfully imposed by the most astute legislator unless they are suited to the state for which they are intended, nor can they be retained after their aptitude has ceased. Forms of government are therefore like the other inventions which, as Bacon says, are the offspring rather of the time than of the inventor (*magis temporis partus quam ingenii*). A discoverer who makes unseasonable discoveries loses all his credit because his efforts are of no utility. The Scan-

dinavians discovered America five centuries before Europe was ready to colonise it, or able to keep up a constant communication with it. Who thanks them? The Arabians discussed the motion of the celestial bodies and the doctrine of attraction, but the idea died away till Newton, without knowledge of the Arabic author, made the discoveries in which he had probably been preceded. The Chinese have been stereotyping their celestial compilations, for anything we know, since the deluge; but Europe acknowledges its only debt in that respect to be to Fust or Coster, who were impelled by the burst of intellectual progress to devise some means for the better diffusing of the knowledge already among men, and greater facilities for spreading, and therefore greater encouragement for producing the new thoughts and the new discoveries of the many labourers who then entered on the long deserted field of intellectual research. This reflection affords a natural explanation of the remarkable and frequently recurring fact of simultaneous discoverers. If Newton and Leibnitz, Berkeley and Collier, Young and Champollion, Romas and Franklyn, Hume and Voltaire, Adams and Leverrier, Goethe and Oken, West and Malthus,—if each of these illustrious pairs, in their far distant studies, removed the same obstacles to knowledge at the same moment, it does not necessarily follow, nay, in many instances it is physically impossible, that one should be the borrower from the other. Human progress led them to the same point, and each mastered the obstruction.*

* I cannot assent to M. Turgot (*Sur l'Histoire des Progrès de l'Esprit humain*, Œuvr. ii. 264) in his opinion that if Columbus and Newton had died at fifteen, America would have been discovered two centuries later, and we should still have been ignorant of the true system of the world. Such notions infer that there was some particular dispensation to Newton and Columbus, in which other mortals could not partake, or that there was some happy organic conformation peculiar to such geniuses, and not to be hit upon for two centuries, at least by any one else. A

With this, too, is connected the curious fact, that one scarcely ever hears of a man of great distinction who was not surrounded by men employing themselves in the same way as himself, many of them deserving to enjoy an illustrious reputation, and who would enjoy it were it not eclipsed by one yet more brilliant. Indeed, we might lay it down that, if we find one very great poet, orator, or metaphysician in a nation at a particular period, we may be sure that that period was fertile in men only less great devoting themselves to similar occupations. It seems hardly possible for one man to excel in any branch unless the way of thinking which he had to follow is habitual to a class of no despicable compeers. If Shakspeare is our greatest dramatist, we find about him a crowd of poets (not his imitators), many of them of no mean abilities, endeavouring to carry English dramatic art to its greatest perfection, and we find Shakspeare excelling them all. If Homer was the greatest epic narrator of early Grecian history, we know that his was the age of rhapsodical compositions, and that Homer (if we retain his individuality) surmounts them all. If Mirabeau stood forth to manifest the revolution, we can recall the memories of a crowd of heroes enlisted in the cause of the human species, who acknowledged him as their chief. If Laplace penetrated the design of the Creator in the movements of the planets, he is only the shrewdest and subtlest of a group which boasts to have among them D'Alembert, Lagrange, and Clairaut. If Burke is our greatest orator, we know that at his period there were mighty men endeavouring in England to surpass in eloquence, more mighty than had appeared before. So with Demosthenes, so with Cicero; and to the end of the chapter. The great

position singularly unhappy in the instance of Columbus, for America had certainly been discovered before Columbus was born; and not much more happy in the case of Newton, for in some of his discoveries he had contemporary, in others he had antecedent rivals.

man, in whatever his eminence consists, is the impersonation of the advancing spirit of his age; and it is in his power of leading and expressing this spirit, be it in art, or in science, or in literature, that his superiority is displayed. If he goes out of the required track, or goes with his lantern so far ahead of his contemporaries that darkness intervenes between him and them, of what use is his pioneering * — the land which he has discovered must be discovered again, and as the new discoverer alone is useful, so he will gain all the glory.

Adaptation to his age, which is required in every man who would be useful and renowned in science, literature, or art, is doubly needed in the legislator who, unless his views and his works are fully in accordance with the necessities of the people, inflicts on his nation, in giving it an unsuitable code of institutions, a worse injury than a wounded soldier would receive from a surgeon who amputated his arm for a gunshot in the leg.

A state-machine cannot work if it requires to set and keep it in operation institutions, manners, feelings which do not exist. I doubt whether more than a single instance can be adduced of a free constitution transferred peaceably from the closet of the philosopher, and put successfully into action. Constitutions to be healthy must be formed by gradual accretion, and a careful adaptation to the established habits, feelings, and social conditions. Even an absolute monarchy, like that of Napoleon III., the simplest form of government possible, took five years to perfect its system, and yet the great foundation of it, the spirit of thorough centralisation, had been laid since the days of Louis XIV. The constitutions of antiquity do not refute my remark, for in Greece everything was

* Except, of course, when, as in the case of Lord Bacon, his discourses and precepts can be recorded for the good of posterity, who may have advanced to the point where the pioneer laboured. Bacon, conscious of his too great advance, had no hopes of fame among his contemporaries, but committed his name and memory to future ages.

attributed to a god or a man ; and the result of the continued action of several generations of men, working almost unconsciously, and certainly without foreseeing, perhaps without desiring the event, were all given to some one individual whose very existence is open to reasonable doubt. Solon, Minos, and Lycurgus may have been great innovators, and in that case it may be true that men lived under their legislation, just as since 1831 we have been living under the legislation of Lord John Russell ; or perhaps they may have been personifications of persons who formed a declaratory act, like that of 1688. The saying, however, which I have already quoted as Solon's, shows that if he is a myth, those who invented Solon knew how to make a wise man talk. But with or without a legislator, people after a time stumble on the right form, by happy accident as some think, or to speak more reverently, and I believe not less correctly, the laws of national growth are so formed that the government should assume at each period the outward shape most suited to the period of native life, as a man or a plant, each in every particular, adapts its outward form to the inward growth.

The constitution of Washington will perhaps occur to the reader as an instance invalidating my position, that all constitutions to be prosperous must have grown and been evolved on the soil, as those of the Roman Commonwealth and of England. America is an exception only in form, for when the States rose against England, they were living under the British Constitution, and after their separation, they retained all of it that suited them, and pruned it of those parts which were necessary only for a nation with a monarchy and aristocracy. So that considering the Anglo-Saxon race to have split into two branches, we may truly say that their constitutions now — the English and that of Washington — are modifications of the old constitution of Britain in the last century ; two different growths from the same stem ; the forms of government deriving their difference from the difference

between the national characters. But the system of the Anglo-Americans suited their Mexican neighbours no better than the British Constitution would have done. M. de Tocqueville says, "Les habitans de Mexique, voulant établir le système fédératif, prirent pour modèle, et copièrent presque entièrement la constitution fédérale des Anglo-Américains, leurs voisins (1824). Mais en transportant chez eux la lettre de la loi, ils ne purent transporter en même temps l'esprit qui la vivifie. On les vit donc s'embarasser sans cesse parmi les rouages de leur double gouvernement. La souveraineté des états et celle de l'union sortant du cercle que la constitution avait tracé, pénétrèrent chaque jour l'une dans l'autre. Actuellement encore le Mexique est sans cesse entraîné de l'anarchie au despotisme militaire, et du despotisme militaire à l'anarchie."*

Reflections such as these have induced me to hold the opinion that governments vary with the national character and are dependent on it; meaning by the words national character not so much the character of one nation as distinguished from another, as the condition, moral, intellectual, and physical of a nation, at a given period of its existence. As we talk of the character of infancy or of manhood, so we must now talk of the character of a nation in its earliest stage, in its grandeur, in its decline; and it will be part of the object of the following chapters to trace, if possible, the mutations of national character, and the consequent mutations of the form of government.

Napoleon said, "Public morals are the national complement of all laws: they of themselves form an entire code." If to them you add, or by them you understand, all the intellectual and moral dispositions which men bring into society, the habitual occupations of the people, their wealth, their distinctions of rank, their national importance, their historical recollections, their physical

* Dém. en Amér. i. 269.

characteristics, their relations with foreign powers, their laws and customs, and an infinitude of other simple ideas, too vast to be enumerated here, some explanation is adumbrated of that phrase which, by denoting as a whole the condition of a national system, is intended to imply that for a knowledge of it we must necessarily know the condition of every constituent part.

The principle of a necessary relation between the form of government and the circumstances and habits of the society in which it is established, dismisses as vain and fruitless the abstract dissertations about the comparative excellence of any ideal government, in which it was so much the habit of the last age to indulge. With Pope we may say : —

“ For forms of government let fools contest,
Whiche’er is best administer’d is best : ”

if by “ best administered ” we understand not merely that in which the dominant order exercises its superiority and its power most for the general good, but also that which is best suited to the exigencies of the state. A go-cart and a merlin-chair are excellent things for the infantine and the senile respectively, but it would be manifestly absurd to assert that the go-cart is the instrument most suited for the locomotive powers of man. But it is just as absurd to discuss the question whether monarchy or democracy is the best form of government for every community, in every stage of its existence, and under all circumstances. There is no model institution, no infallible panacea, whether Benthamite or not, for sick nations. A true Englishman believes constitutional monarchy to be the best government, and long may he think so ; but the cosmopolitan politician must admit that each form has been found good and necessary in its turn, and the government must be changed when the national climate changes. As the husbandman reaps most when he sows what suits the climate and the soil, so nations reap a

larger harvest of happiness when they adapt their government to the necessities of the age.

If these positions are true, it follows that a limit is placed on the power of the legislator. I cannot discuss that limit any more than I can discuss the bounds of the free will of man: but it is evident that the legislator is subject to the same restrictions as those imposed on his fellow men in their every action, for universally human will consists only in the power to decide this alternative;— Shall we, or shall we not, in reference to this particular matter, put into operation any, and which, of those laws of nature, which by the constitution of things are appropriate to act upon it. M. Quetelet's* "disturbing force of mankind" is nothing but the exercise of this power of removing the subject-matter out of the region of one law into that of another. Man has the capacity of disturbing the operations of a law, but he has only the option of some few ways of disturbing them, viz. of calling into action some of the other laws which are framed so as to be competent to act upon the subject. Till, therefore, we know all the laws of nature, it is impossible to know the limits or extent of human power. But it is manifest, that in proportion as the laws become more known, man will know better how to effect his ends, and his power will, therefore, practically increase.† Yet so long as men remain constituted as we are, never can the legislator or any other human being violate without disaster the laws of nature.

Machiavel perceived this great truth, that no state could be wholesome unless its constitution was in harmony with its social adjustments; but his specific for preserving this harmony is one which would destroy every kind of progress. Instead of altering the dependent

* Sur l'Homme, p. 22, *sqq.*

† Lord Bacon said, "Knowledge and human power are synonymous, since the ignorance of the cause frustrates the effect."—*Nov. Org.* i. § 3.

to suit the independent variable, he would have retraced the variation in both. He recommended that the state should be constantly renovated, or brought back to that primæval condition in which its constitution naturally arose.* This was more dangerous than the Spartan rule. Lycurgus desired to preserve intact the social characteristics on which a military aristocracy can alone rest with firmness; rightly anticipating that the constitution would then need no change. By stopping the change of all national character he prevented the necessity for changing the form of government. The Jewish plan was that of Machiavel, for there trade and improvidence were allowed to bring about their natural changes unchecked for half a century together; but at the end of every period of fifty years, God, according to their theory, resumed the whole soil, and granted it back again to the same families and in the same portions as at the first distribution.† The struggles of a feudal aristocracy to wrest back whatever constitutional power a king may have drawn from them, exemplify the same principle of action, so long as the constitutional power attempted to be retaken by the aristocrats is proportionate with their substantive power in the state. The true plan is to adapt the constitution to the social conditions. In our future chapters we shall trace these social conditions, their nature, their successions, their durations; and as we trace them we shall point out the forms of government which are appropriate to them.

* Discors, lib. iii. c. 1.

† Milman's History of the Jews, i. 178.

CHAP. II.

HUMAN PROGRESS.

“ As through a torch-race, where, from hand to hand,
 The flying youths transmit their shining brand—
 From frame to frame the unextinguish'd soul
 Rapidly passes, till it reach the goal.”—MOORE.

WORDS are like coins in twenty different ways, as twenty different essayists have remarked, yet we may perhaps add to the long list one more point of similarity. When a coin is much in circulation, who examines whether the mint-master was true to the standard and the weight? Every one else passes their pieces without testing them; we shall be safe in doing likewise. When a word is repeated in every number of every newspaper, who scruples to use it himself on every hack occasion? Other persons do not know and weigh the full meaning and intent of this word—they pass it from mouth to mouth without examination. Why need we be more accurate than our neighbours?

“Progress” is the word, *par excellence*, which every one uses and nobody examines. It exchanges for many ideas. In one place it means railways and telegraphs; in another it means free trade; in leading articles it is better sewerage; in cabinets it is revolution; on the hustings it is democracy; in the lecture-room it is a novelty of science; in the vestry it is abolition of vested interests; in the drawing-room it is a new knick-nack; in one nation it is liberty of the press; in another it is increased centralisation. With servants, progress is a new name for insolence; with masters, it means a reduction of wages. In England

progress is synonymous with the spirit of the nineteenth century; on the Continent it is looked upon as the distinctive characteristic of Anglo-Saxon civilisation. Some, like the fly on the axle-wheel, admire progress as something of their own making; others, content to be where they are, fear an unknown movement. The Liberal embraces it as the essence of his policy. The Conservative scorns it as an idea invented to delude the millions. The philosopher opens his turret casement and says, "Do you hear the daws chattering, Progress! Progress! Who taught it them?" *perhaps it is the daws who may have taught it further on.*

But in the chamber of the recluse, in the halls of analysing wisdom, certainty dwells not, and the wrangling within is perhaps no better than the chattering without. Whoever would examine this current phrase comes upon one of those smouldering contests, which exist through all ages, at one time almost extinct, at another blazing out in great fury, about the nature and direction of human progress; a contest, I need hardly say, resting in a great measure on ambiguity of expression — for what contest does not? One good man and true will tell you that, for his part, he cannot help believing that the human kind has been advancing apparently towards perfection ever since history was first written. He repeats, in no spirit of vain-glory, but from sober credence, the boast of Sthenelus. His only difficulty is to tell where to begin in enumerating the points in which we excel our remote ancestors. If we fall ill, a doctor attends us who has fifty times more medical knowledge than Galen and Hippocrates. If we look at the facilities for travelling, we may perceive a series of improvements, from the great military roads of the Romans — vast benefits in their day — to the fast coaches of twenty years ago, and the still faster trains which are at this moment flying in every direction. Nothing that we wear or handle has not been improved and rendered more accessible to all classes during the last century. And in the more important question of religion, the meanest and most

ignorant Christian knows what the wisest of the heathens only guessed. Wherever we turn, on whatsoever we cast our glance — but no, let us spare the reader more of this subject, on which more vapid and stupid declamation has been poured out in this our “talking era,” than on any given theme that ever young gentlemen in a debating society prelected upon. Cross the literary saloon, and you will hear some man of much thought and of high feeling talk of universal decadence — there is less of the chivalry of olden times, sordid views are more prevalent, confidence in public characters is shaken, repudiated debts and speculative fevers mark the breaking up of nations. These, one might be tempted to think, are the opposite poles of political opinion, which will never be brought together till the destruction of the world or the arrival of Millennium. Now, without attempting to accelerate either of these events, we do not despair of reconciling the two opinions of the Hopeful and the Despondent Politician. For the truth is, that there are two sorts of political progress ; that of nations, which Vico showed to be cyclical, from insignificance passing through a period of greatness to insignificance again, — and that of humanity, a steady progress, the march of one that advances and never recedes. The difference may be illustrated in this way : The human species engages in a race of intellectual progress after the fashion of the Greek torch-race, where the bearers of the torch handed it from one to another as they became exhausted * ; but no one is allowed to take up the torch till he is in the flower of youth, and must hand it over to his next neighbour as soon as age or accident has weakened his frame or retarded his pace. He falls back and dies ; his neighbour carries along the torch till he too hands it to another. The torch then, which is Humanity, the onward progress of mankind’s improvement, whatever

* Λαμπάδα ἔχοντες διαδύσουσιν ἀλλήλοις.—*Plato, De Rep. lib. i. 828 a.*

may be the goal to which it must ultimately come, has advanced without any perceptible tendency to retrograde, while the bearers of the torch — the nations of the world — have fallen away and died when their part in the great race of human advancement has been played. *than! the Da still chattering*

We need not marvel that the progress of humanity has not yet found its historian, for to expound its course would be to write the history of every science, every art, every form of human knowledge; we should have, irrespective of all national considerations, to trace the progress of astronomy, chemistry, medicine, manufactures, financial science, the art of locomotion, and all those many little scraps of intellectual work that are now and then taken up enthusiastically and improved, and then let alone perhaps for centuries, but each of them fitting as a piece of mosaic, or rather as one of the numerous wires in a coil of telegraph, into the great human progress which is advanced, however slightly, by helping on any fragment of the moving mass. I do not know a more fascinating occupation than to trace this progress of the Spirit of Man, one far more pleasing than the work we undertake; for we seek our facts and data amid wrecks, and sepulchres, and ruins, and deduce our conclusions from the revolutions of empires and the demolition of nations; while in this grander progress we know of nothing but improvement, every new tableau has more light and less cloud than its predecessors, and not a single retrograde step occurs to make us lament the past or despair of the future.

“For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns.”
A. TENNYSON.

There are stars which at this moment see our earth as it was four thousand years ago; others who now may behold Babylon in its glory, and perhaps see the Chaldean shepherds looking at them from their folds; to others nearer us the days of Pericles are visible, or the two brothers are founding the city on the Tiber; while

to some closer neighbours our world now appears as it was when Harold Haarfagre sent forth the Scandinavian hordes to found the aristocracies of Europe. I have sometimes amused myself by thinking that the inhabitants of those orbs gifted with keener visions and with subtler minds than are found here, may sketch the great features of the scene that passes before them, and mark in characters more enduring than those graven on the substances of this earth, each great step in the advancement of human knowledge ; and while the trivial details which fill our paltry annals perish in the neglect they deserve, the great epoch-forming movements, whereby nations have been called forth and developed and again destroyed, are there selected and recorded. It may be in every sense a vision of the night, but who has ventured to contemplate this progress without introducing some unreal fancy to fill those voids we uselessly lament ? The utmost limits of human research, the highest grasp of human intellect, can hope to reproduce but a faint image of this mighty career.

Whither tends it ? the impatient spectator has frequently asked, not without a hope, if its destination is agreeable, of being carried along with it. We have various shades of opinion on that point, — from the believer in a great world-catastrophe in the year 2000 A.D., to M. Comte, the founder of a new religion which he calls the Religion of Humanity. Some believe that the trail of the serpent will ever deface mankind ; others think that our species is destined to attain, in future ages, that perfection which not the most vain among us can arrogate to it now, and that the spirit of humanity may say with Milton :—

“Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race.

* * * * *

Attired with stars, we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time.”

The idea of human perfectibility, which is necessarily

connected to some extent with notions of eternity, was apparently first spread among the French by M. Turgot's "*Discours dont l'objet devoit être les progrès de l'esprit humain.*" He had many followers in France and some few in England; among the latter was William Jackson, of Exeter. His book entitled "*Four Ages,*" was intended to astonish the world in 1798. The Iron and Brazen Ages having been dismissed with deep scorn, Mr. Jackson says that since the Restoration we have been "increasing in velocity towards perfection, like a comet as it approaches the sun." The majority of the Americans are said to be convinced of the indefinite perfectibility of man, and M. de. Tocqueville devotes a chapter to the question whether this idea has been fostered by their social equality. But however caused, speculations on an event so remote, and affording no ground for sober calculation, are surely a mischievous vanity.

To ruminate on the fate of mankind, and, reposing on some sunny bank, to conjure up in the mind's eye the shifting scenes, each more happy and more glorious, through which humanity is destined to pass till it reaches an earthly paradise, and takes up its residence in a nation where justice reigns without a rival; where the distinctions of wealth and poverty are unknown; where disease attempts an inroad in vain, and the crimes with which we are familiar have no name in their language, no representative in their acts; where deeds of beneficence are universal, and differ only from ours because conferred on persons who want neither the power nor the will to return them; where the conquest of mind over matter is accomplished, and the great design of the Deity, which may be read in the face and form of nature, to make man lord of all terrestrial things, has been completed by his own exertions; where paid ministers of religion exist not, because the mind of man is so pure and his heart so open, that, imbued with the sense of his insignificance he offers with spontaneous humility those simple prayers of which

ours, uttered by deputy, are but a mockery — or to yield to the bold conception of the French philosopher, and suppose that humanity is on its way to a throne in heaven, which shall surpass any that have been imagined there before, and that, borne thereto at last by the sweat and labour of four thousand centuries, the races of the earth will fall down and worship before that idol, which they and their ancestors have erected — to indulge in these and such like reveries may be the congenial occupation of the poetic mind which, ignorant of the laws of the celestial sphere, should people the planets with the creation of its own heated brain, or find in the orbs that shine above us the last homes of the blessed or of the damned. But in like manner as practical astronomy would gain no benefit, but rather be confused by the dreams of the one; so are social and historical inquiries obscured and misdirected by the vain imaginings of the other. When we have established the laws which have regulated with invariable action past events, we are then, and not till then, in a position to consider whether there is anything to prevent a similar action hereafter.

*From Dawkins's
History*

Now, it is obvious that every national progress has, during a certain period, been connected with the great progress of human knowledge—the bearers of the torch moving as fast as the torch moves so long as they hold it—the nation advancing itself while it advances humanity. We shall have to note hereafter how the history of every nation which has made a stir in the world, informs us that at some one period that nation impressed its character on the century, that among its citizens were nearly all the inventors, the successful diplomatists, the great thinkers of the age, all, in short, who were then advancing knowledge and controlling the movements of the world; but history equally teaches us that when a more fresh and vigorous nation has arisen, its predecessor, enfeebled by the glorious but enervating race, may turn piteously and ask,—

“ Qui prior es, cur me in decursu lampada poscas ? ”

but it will ask in vain. Ruthless wars are the result, and the inevitable end is that the younger and stronger and more honourable nation seizes the torch.

“From the beginning and before the world,” says the spirit of human wisdom, “was I created, and unto the world to come I shall not cease, and in the holy habitation I have ministered before him. And so in Sion was I established, and in the sanctified city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem, and I took root in an honorable people. . . . Pass to me all ye that desire me, and be filled of my generations. My memory is unto generations of worlds. . . . I will penetrate all the inferior parts of the earth, and will behold them that sleep. I have not laboured for myself only, but for all that seek unto the truth.”*

So the spirit of humanity passes from hand to hand among the nations, a mighty heritage, which each transfers richer than it received it. Do we wonder that it is struggled for? Can we cease to admire the irrevocable law by which each nation, as soon as it acquires its prize, seeks to enhance its value, and gives it up only when a rival comes forward more capable to pursue that work? Is there anything grander in nature than the decree, that the accumulated wisdom of the world should not lose a fragment of its substance at the death of its possessor, but ever keep passing on to those more worthy to receive and to enlarge it? Is there a nobler destiny for nations than to spend their life and strength in increasing the stock of human knowledge and human power? The best known of all the aphorisms of Pascal is that where with a burning thought, yet grander than those with which he abounds, he impresses this truth upon men's minds: “*Toute la succession des hommes, pendant la longue suite des siècles, doit être considérée comme un seul homme qui subsiste toujours, et qui apprend continuellement.*”

* Ecclesiasticus, xxiv.

We cannot look far back along the lines of time. The inventions of language, of writing, and of the arts, now considered necessary to civilised life, belong to ages and to nations unknown to us. We know those who have advanced humanity in its later progress, but we forget those sojourners on earth who set it going.

"The world knows nothing of the greatest men."

Der Baron von
Le Chevalier

*Why give the
: even a French
Appellation? Why
not in English
call him Baron B.*

Bunsen has tracked human development among the pyramids; we know that it came from India, but the sands of time have blown over and obliterated the course. But the beginning, that we cannot scrutinise; the steady march for so many centuries unchecked by every obstacle, ever passing from the failing to the strong, leaving with unimpaired vigour the fallen cities which had cherished it, itself the trophy which the victors have borne away as the choicest spoil in their triumph, but which in the end has been too rich a prize for the captors to retain; and lastly the prospect of a yet more glorious future,—all these inspire a religious awe into the minds of those who dare to contemplate this magnificent and irresistible career.

But with this endeavour to distinguish between the progress of humanity and the progress of nations, we must dismiss the former from our inquiry. The statesman has nothing to do with the progress of humanity, except to help his nation to take part in the race as soon, and to remain in it as long, as it can. He is concerned, not with the torch, but with the bearers of the torch. It would have been well if those who, denominating themselves philosophers of history, have essayed to write manuals for statesmen, had borne that fact in mind. Not one of them except Vico has escaped the most lamentable confusion; and because Vico thought fit to confine his researches to national progress, he has been the subject of constant attacks by superficial pamphleteers, who attempt to refute his cyclical theory of national existence by

pointing to the steady, intellectual advance of mankind. Even M. Cousin has indulged in remarks on the philosophy of history which I forbear to characterise. M. Comte, who in his views of the past displays acuteness and originality of the highest order, fails entirely where he comes to construct his dynamical scheme for the future. For instance, the whole drama of history is according to him a series of stages leading to one great result of inestimable good, called "The Rise of the Industrial Order," which means nothing but the establishment of a plutocracy with a first class of Bankers, a second of Merchants, a third of Manufacturers, a fourth of Agriculturists. Now, it is true enough that some such organisation has been brought about in France, where at this moment the plutocracy is the only body of men pretending to the slightest importance, if we except the functionaries, civil and military, the former of whom are often chosen out of them. But, in the name of positivism, how can M. Comte assert that the ultimate effect of the progress of humanity is the development of a plutocracy? Surely this omnipotence of wealth is a sign of an advanced stage of national existence, not of the final stage of humanity. Should a hardy nation of rude warriors pour itself again over Europe, we may be sure that Vico's principle will hold true; we shall have again a series of the same national evolutions that we have already seen twenty times repeated on our earth; and it will not be till this new nation has advanced the torch of humanity yet farther than it is now, that it will itself arrive at the stage where wealth in money is the only or chief source of power.

To take one more instance:—M. Comte remarks the growing unpopularity of the military life, and its tendency to become a very subordinate office of modern society, but this arises from the fact that the nations whom he contemplates are in that advanced stage in which, as Lord Bacon remarks, arms are no longer of exclusive honour, manufactures and commerce flourish. It is

again manifest that this observation applies only to particular nations of the day. Can M. Comte extend it to the great hordes of Russia, to the Swedes, or to any people that has as yet not passed through the national cycle of changes? And were not the same effects to be seen in Greece when the military spirit declined, in the Roman Empire when its armies were composed of barbarians, in Italy when the citizens resigned their wars to mercenary bands of foreigners? These examples and many more might be adduced, display the painful confusion between these two sorts of progress that runs through the whole of M. Comte's works.

The same confusion pervades the "Introduction" of M. Gervinus. "The States of Europe," he says, "since the commencement of the Christian era form as connected and general a history as that of the group of states of the Greek peninsula and its colonies in antiquity. The same order and the same law is revealed in the course of their internal development in both periods, and in the history of the whole human race this law may be again observed in its largest manifestations. From oriental despotism to aristocracy, from the government of the ancients, and of the middle ages, founded on slavery and serfdom, to the policy of modern times which is yet in the course of development, a regular progress may be perceived from the intellectual and civil freedom of one alone, to that of the few and of the many."

Now the error is this : The law is true for every state. It is one of the laws of national progress. In this I agree with M. Gervinus, but when he says it is one of the laws of the progress of humanity, it is necessary to dissent. The old states of the East, India, China, Egypt, the old Constantinopolitan empire, ruled over and patched up by the Turks, have all passed through the cycle of nation life, and are now in that post-mortem condition in which the anarchical sandheaps of human units whereof such nations are composed, are kept together for ages by a

rigid despotism, a despotism quite different from that of a warrior king over his tribe, or of a monarch who rules the yet undeveloped commons with the power of an autocrat, because he has succeeded in quelling the aristocracy (as for example Russia at the present day, Denmark from 1660 to the beginning of this century). Now, to trace a progress from such a despotism to the feudal system of the middle ages, and thence to the civil freedom of our day, is nothing else but putting the cart before the horse. The Gothic monarchies were young nations, the constitutional kingdoms of this century are middle-aged nations, and the Oriental despotisms are old nations. The fact that these Gothic nations rose into life after the others fell away into insignificance is all that connects them in an order of sequence, otherwise they ought rather to be put side by side as individual nations going through substantially the same course of progress. There was a progress of M. Gervinus's family (at least we hope so) from his grandfather to his father, and thence to the Professor; but the grandfather, father, and Professor might be put side by side as men who have — unless cut short by premature death — passed through the course of human life. Just so with our political great-grandfathers, the Oriental nations; our grandfathers, the Greeks; our fathers, the Romans. *We* being in this instance the Gothic nations of modern Europe, who are brothers and sisters of very different dispositions and fortunes, but all doing the same thing, namely, living a nation-life.

Nations, then, however remote in time, bear a resemblance in their common nature, which in the gross effaces the difference caused by the relation of succession. No one denies that every nation has been marked by strong individual features which distinguish it from all its fellows, but we contend that all nations have developed themselves according to a more or less modified action of the same laws, and have — the most prominent of them — each

proceeded to join in the great development of humanity after the same method. The great difference that we perceive between, for instance, the science of Greece and that of England, being due partly, no doubt, to the greater scientific skill of our country, but very mainly to the point at which scientific progress had arrived when our nation took it up. This fact is analogous to that which, when M. Quetelet's book on Social Physics appeared *, was a truth, but is now a truism, that though Newton had a much greater knowledge of the mathematical sciences than Archimedes, it does not necessarily follow that Newton was individually a greater man than Archimedes. It was his position in time, it was the point at which in the progress of knowledge Newton came into action, that has made the Englishman appear greater than the Greek. Had he lived two centuries before our era he might have been in all probability only an Hipparchus, and had Hipparchus proceeded to advance science from the point where it was in the 17th century, he ought to have been a Newton. The advance of knowledge does not give a new nature to the individual, but each takes up the torch of science where the last runner laid it down, and every new bearer has, therefore, his name connected with more advanced progress and more extensive knowledge than appertained to his predecessor, though it by no means follows that the more recent bearer excels in strength and skill those who have gone before him. If we connect these facts with our previous observation, that the great man is the personification, the exponent of his age, there will be something towards a substantive base on which a theory of history may be constructed without necessarily being of the same order of architecture as a Chateau d'Espagne. *Caw, Caw.*

* Sur l'Homme, ii. 280.

a good chapter—

CHAP. III.

THE LAWS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

"Appliquons aux sciences politiques et morales la méthode que nous a si bien servie dans les sciences naturelles."—LAPLACE.

"La fonction de la société, comme celle de l'homme, est d'adhérer et de concourir librement aux lois de la Providence."—TURGOT.

WHAT is it but an admission of a necessary relation between the characters and circumstances of nations and their political systems, when men say "This was the government for the time;"* "This despot, evil though he be, and the government he introduces, yet he is a necessity; we must bear his rule?" What is it but an unconscious assent to one of our fundamental principles, when it is said, "The time will not admit of this or that scheme of legislation; the national character (which like men's characters varies in many particulars with age) was against it?" And this necessity is the less often noticed, because it is only acknowledged when the result is unpleasant. The anti-feudalists of our age, when they have said all they can against the feudal system, conclude with the admission that it was necessary for the state of society in the middle ages, and in fact, the necessity of the time

* Sir H. Spelman, in his Glossary (*sub voce* *Fædum*) says, "De lege feudali pronunciandum censeo temporis eam esse filiam, sensimque succrescentem, edictis principum auctam indies et exultam." And M. Comte, the most zealous of anti-feudalists, renders the thanks of posterity to the feudal system for the good it has done in forming modern civilisation at a time when it was a necessity.

has become a common-place for the defence of nations whose government we dislike, and of individuals whose character we disapprove. But if the government is good it ceases in common parlance to be a necessity; for instance, we are proud of the wisdom of our ancestors at the Revolution, but the government of James was so unsuited to the nation, that the only alternative, the Prince of Orange, was an absolute necessity, yet being a pleasant necessity, people are glad to call him their choice.*

*fatalism or
redestination
- destiny*

These observations, unexplained, might sound like fatalism, a creed which exercises so enervating and debasing an influence on those who embrace it, that one who half believed it himself would be splendidly false if he publicly combated the theory that man is the blind instrument or the innocent victim of preordained purposes. But in truth we are no more fatalists than the philosopher who predicted over the new-born infant that he would pass through boyhood, youth, manhood, and old age to death, unless some casualty accelerated his end, for in attempting to trace some of the great laws of national progress, it is manifest that we have no object in curtailing the freedom of individual action, and may, like poor Teucers, fight under the shield of the statistical philosophers, who assert one of the most striking discoveries of political science, that one man out of a certain number must be a criminal, without making any one of their audience feel that he is irrevocably destined to the unpleasant duty of fulfilling this law. It is fit then to assert general laws which act upon the mass without farther restricting the individual than as a member of the mass.

Chance

But some who reject fatalism, urge that Chance is the king who rules the world, a horrible phantom dreaded by the multitude, because nothing is known of him but the

* *Ἀναγκαῖον*, the Greek word for necessary, was often, as Archbishop Whately (*Notes to King's Discourses*, p. 85) has remarked, used as nearly equivalent to "unpleasant" or "disadvantageous."

tremendous effects which they attribute to his agency, and hated by the philosopher because he is only a name for one form of human ignorance. Whatever turns out contrary to our expectation, said Pericles to the Athenians, we attribute to Fortune, and Fortune is sometimes useful, for by attributing to it the successful results of our own efforts, we escape envy. It is easy to attack the throne of this inanimate, inactive puppet, but it is not possible to banish it from the world till more is known of those remote causes which, because their causation is often too intricate to reward a diligent investigation, and at the same time too trifling to allure men to the attempt, have had the honour of what they effected taken from them and given to this demon. At present, therefore, the wisest man must be content to say as the million says, that some accidents have entirely changed the form of human affairs ; but these are much fewer than the historians of the backstairs and their admirers are willing to admit. Nothing has been more fatal to historical science than the journals of demi-courtiers, who think that admission to an antechamber lays open to them the springs of national action. The Dutch medal, with the legend insolently triumphing over the kings and potentates of Europe, the ill-made window of Louis XIV., the dish of tea spilt over Mrs. Masham's gown, the quarrel between Tetzels and Luther, the drunken revels of the three Athenian youths in the Spartan territory, assume in the pages of those who explain history by anecdotes an importance which, if true, would render wholly futile any attempt at systematising human events ; but they are, in fact, as Laplace somewhere remarks, attributing the inevitable effects of constant causes to the accidental circumstances which only caused the development of their action : they are ascribing to the spark the effects due to the train previously laid, as well as to itself. There would have been war between Holland and France had no insulting medal been struck, and the Reformation would have been accomplished had Luther never existed.

For it is not given to one man to establish a reformed religion without the sympathetic energy of thousands ; and would those thousands have necessarily stood back from their enterprise if Martin Luther had happened to be still-born ? The causes of the Reformation, and of all great political movements, are to be sought in the social conditions of the nation, not in the character of individuals.

It was no accident that the changes effected by the first French revolution were effected, though it perhaps was an accident that they were effected by the revolution. It has been suggested* with great fairness that if Louis XV. had been a man cast in the same mould with Frederick the Great, he could have forestalled the revolution by making peaceably and gradually those changes which from long denial could subsequently be made only by a violent revolution. Had he done so, would France at this day have been substantially different from what it is ? I think not. For his scheme would have been to abolish nobility, to centralise, equalise, and turn the feudal monarchy into a centralised despotism. Possibly a Bourbon instead of a Napoleon would have been on the throne, and might have been called king instead of emperor, but his rule would have been of the same nature, and founded on the same administrative structure, as the present Napoleonic throne. There are other accidents, however, which are not concurrent with constant causes. "Perhaps," says Gibbon, "the Greeks would be still involved in the heresy of the Monophysites if the emperor's horse had not fortunately stumbled. Theodosius expired ; his orthodox sister succeeded to the throne." "How differently," remarks Mr. Lieber, whose views on this point are always very just, "would, in all probability, history have turned out had Gustavus Adolphus lived to make himself Protestant Emperor of Germany." Undoubtedly all the details of history would

* By M. de Tocqueville, *L'Anc. Régime*, p. 252.

have been wonderfully different according as such accidents occurred or not, but the regular and prolonged causes would in the gross surmount the effect of those irregular causes. Had Gustavus Adolphus been Protestant Emperor of Germany, the consequences would have been vast at the time; but it is very doubtful whether at this moment, or even at the beginning of this century, the cardinal features of the world's civilisation would have been different from what they are now. Possibly the Greeks might have been still involved in the heresy mentioned by Gibbon, but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the efficacy of the doctrine to know whether it would have prevented the Greeks from being conquered by the Turks in the 15th century, or from remaining in the nineteenth the most degraded of races.

*In Cont. V. 1
Monophysite
maintain as
the divinity of
Christ he
absorbed the
and consequent
within the
but on that.*

In this part of the inquiry we have, for once, the advantage of experiment. The assassin comes to our aid. Believing that the removal of some prominent individual would turn the fate of an empire, murderers—judicial or otherwise—have put their belief to the test of experiment. With what result? Ask of the Romans, who saw no liberty on the death of Cæsar; ask our Parliament-men, who when they beheaded a king, had not abolished kingship; observe the ecclesiastical power in England, not less strong because Becket had fallen; and let present times attest that the slow murder of Napoleon I. has not warded off an empire from France. The death of a leader has never destroyed, and never will destroy, a great social principle. The assassin is as impotent as he is vile.

Nothing is more remarkable to the student of history who dares to take comprehensive views, than the insignificance of the effects due to those irregular causes which act as disturbing forces to the operation of those more powerful and constant causes that effect the great movements of society. The fundamental principle of Quetelet's "Physique Sociale" might be also the groundwork of a science of history. "Plus le nombre des individus que

*aboliti
77 Probabilis* l'on observe est grand, plus les particularités individuelles, soit physiques, soit morales, s'effacent et laissent prédominer la série des faits généraux en vertu desquels la société existe et se conserve." *

But one consideration even yet more completely removes the disquietude which the presence of accident might produce. It is this. Accident does not alter the laws of nature, not even the backstairs historian indulges in such a supposition ; accidents, allowing them all the influence they are popularly supposed to possess, can merely bring the subject-matter under the influence of laws which did not operate on it before, and therefore accelerate, retard, or stunt the development which is appropriate to it. To us, therefore, whose object is to find out some of these laws, and to trace that development, the presence of accident, so far from being an impediment, may rather be an assistance. For it is one of the great objects of such a study as this to enable us to distinguish between the result of the constant causes, the phenomena due to the plainer laws of national life, and the effects of irregular causes, the phenomena which we may, speaking popularly, ascribe to accident. It is our duty of course to eliminate accident, to describe national development as it takes place when emancipated from accident ; but practical benefit, which is the true end of all social researches, may sometimes induce us, in violation of theoretical symmetry, to point out some grave lessons—the handiwork of accident—which history teaches to statesmen. So long as this thing we call accident remains unexplained, prophecy is impossible. We can only foretell of the future what it will be if the laws which we understand are allowed to work, if development is allowed to proceed without interruption ; but this is scarcely ever the case for any lengthened period. The matter which was subject to the known action of one law, is suddenly removed into the field of action of another law ; we perhaps may

* Quetelet, Sur l'Homme, i. 12.

know the operation of both laws, and be able to say what would be the result if the matter were allowed to remain under the action of the first or the second law ; but then it is again transferred, in a manner unforeseen and for reasons unknown, to the field of action of a third law ; and even if we know the workings of the third law, still we cannot prophesy, because the matter may be submitted to the operation of a fourth law, or back again to the domain of the first or the second.

What power is it which thus at pleasure removes nations from the operation of one of those laws by which they are governed to that of another, just as man, of his free will, can take the matter over which he has power out of the sphere of one physical law and submit it to the operation of another ? It is inscrutable. We call it Providence ; we believe it to be the same power that framed the present constitution of the world. If so, there is nothing that we know of to prevent that Power altering the laws which itself has made. But as in physical matters we see that the laws, once fixed at creation, have never been altered ; as David said respecting the stars, "Thou gavest them a law which cannot be broken" — so I see no impiety in believing (as history proves, so far as the thing is susceptible of proof,) that the laws by which national progress is governed were fixed at creation and remain unchanged. Yet, as I have said, the face of affairs is every day totally changed, not by changing the laws, but by submitting the subject-thing to the operation of different laws. To investigate these laws and their result is the only method vouchsafed to us of inquiring of the oracles of God. To understand the system by which He governs the world, to conform ourselves to its laws, and, so far as we may be permitted the possession of some little and brief power, to use that power, not in a vain contradiction to His system, but in concord and harmony with it ; this is the truest worship that mortals can offer to the Immortal.

CHAP. IV.

THE ORIGIN.

"Ma sendo tutte le cose degli uomini in moto, e non potendo stare salde, conviene che le sagliano, o che le scendano."—MACCHIAVELLI.

"Les hommes agitent; mais Dieu mène."—BOSSUET.

THE reflections expressed in the preceding chapters were intended to aid us in the task which we shall now attempt, the description of the course of national progress; meaning by that term not the biography of individual nations, but the exposition of the phases which their constant occurrence has taught us to consider common to nations as a class. We would investigate, if possible, the laws by which a nation's life is regulated, by which the same bodies corporate exist in degrees of life and perfection, with capacities of action, and opportunities of reception, different in one period of their being from those appointed them in another. We would find in the moral order of the universe that which has already been discovered in its material order :

	—“quas dum primordia rerum
Violation of this command	Pangeret, omniparens leges violare Creator
	Noluit, atque operum quæ fundamenta locarit.”

and we would find, as the effect of these laws*, the natural

* “Omnis enim philosophiæ difficultas in eo versari videtur, ut a phænomenis motuum investigemus vires naturæ, deinde ab his viribus demonstremus phænomena reliqua.”—*Newton, Preface to the Principia.*

succession of the states of society, and mark their slow, I had almost said stealthy, advent, regarding each as the result of the preceding and the parent of the next. How gradual the transition is will then appear. Preparations for future change are slowly and silently made; ideas at first familiar only in the closets of the studious become current in the popular talk. The foundations of a new organisation are secretly laid by those who have but a slight idea of the structure that is to be built upon them, till at last these subterranean works are laid open, and society, with awful suddenness, reconstructs itself on this new basis.

Like the statue which Condillac endowed with each sense successively, staying, as he gave it every new sense, to consider how far its feelings and powers would be thereby altered and enlarged, so we could trace the development of nations, their gradual endowment with each new element of civilisation. But, happier than Condillac, whose statue had no living prototype till it received its full animation, we sketch no imaginary scene, but at every stage of this development can appeal to the traveller or the historian to furnish us with an example. And thus we may hope to range the nations of the world, both past and present, in a new sequence, to look at them from a point of view from which they have not been regarded before.

Whatever be the work of creation which we contemplate, our pleasure is always increased by discovering amid a multiplicity of effects a unity of design. That pleasure has too long been denied to the student of history. Through some brilliant episodes he has traced the leading and directing idea, and in that the beauty of particular histories has consisted; but the episodes themselves need also to be connected, and they will be when once men have unravelled that

——“mystery in the soul of State
Which hath an operation more divine
Than our mere chroniclers dare meddle with.”

I claim for investigations of this kind, when carried to a perfection far beyond what can at present be attained, the proud distinction of being the very essence and cream of history. They are history analysed. Only after a knowledge of many individual men could we venture to sketch the fixed features of human life, those characteristics which all or most individuals possess in common, and only now, relying on an experience more extensive than that of preceding ages, can we hope to trace the leading features of the general life of nations. But genius, such as that of Thucydides or Aristotle, sometimes anticipates experience, and their wise saws derive confirmation from our modern instances. For under the hand of Thucydides history already showed that at some day it might take its rank among the sciences. The highest effort of the historian is when he so analyses and generalises his description of particular scenes as to make them descriptive also of other scenes far distant in time and place; he paints in the front of his picture the leading character of the class of events in colours that will never fade; in the background are crowded the immaterial and accidental accessories. It is the historian's highest effort to insert into his history of Greece, or France, or England, a chapter of universal history; and so Thucydides* describes the break up of social order in Greece, not with petty details and trifling incidents peculiar to his own nation, but so that his description applies to every other nation when passing through a similar phase of revolutionary agony. For the historian is like the poet, who, as Goethe says, "should seize the particular, and if there be anything sound in it, thus represent the universal."

An impression has probably been conveyed to the reader that he is setting out on an enterprise which few have undertaken before. This is in some measure incorrect; for on the first stage of his route he will pass a whole

* Lib. iii. c. 82, 83.

Remarques
in 1861

caravan of travellers who have not advanced, and never will advance, further. Imagine a natural philosopher required to apply his scientific skill to the subject of rivers. Close by him is the narrow channel which swells into a torrent in winter, and in summer trickles down with so small a stream that the shepherd boy steps over it without a thought. Within his hearing is the foaming cataract that all the year round is crossed only by the bending plank with the lax rope for a balustrade. Within sight of him is the broad majestic river that carries its waters slowly down to the ungrateful sea, which, rejecting the proffered gift, lashes them back again. Ten tributaries run into it, dividing the smooth shaved lawns and the trim parterres of civilisation, each with its green-grown lock. The philosopher observes them not as they murmur by his window; he crosses the granite bridge, but cares not for the tidal stream beneath; their phenomena betray no laws to him, because he is ignorant of one thing, their subterranean sources, and till he knows this—a knowledge apparently inscrutable by man—the river may ebb and flow, the winter torrent may rage, the canal may run dry, but they bring no increase of knowledge to him. He is bent on knowing only the origin of rivers.

This, which would be conspicuous folly in a natural philosopher, is the stock-in-trade of essayists who have indulged in metaphysical disquisitions on the social system. To be profound, it was necessary to go back to the very origin of things, whence they never returned, but stayed there like Milton's fallen angels:—

“Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
* * * * *
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost.”

It would be tedious to recount their ingenious speculations. A savage is imagined; his self-education, his amours, his settlement in life, the productions of his in-

ventive genius, the education of his family, his paternal sway, are all interestingly traced, and he dies the honoured father of civilisation. Or, it is supposed that at some unknown period, some unknown king met some unknown commons on some unknown island, and they then and there signed, sealed, and delivered an "original contract" whereby the king covenants to govern well, and the people to obey him if he does so. This last was a favourite hypothesis, not only with the recluse, whose ideas on politics are generally semi-morbid, but grave legislators, supported by practical thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, supposed that some persons had at some time done a metaphysical act of this kind, and remodelled our constitution in 1689 expressly on the theory of the original compact; which proves, at least, that however trifling and ridiculous may be the grounds of legislative choice, a species perhaps of irresistible grace prevents us from ultimately choosing any other than that form of government which the time demands. It would be a fortunate dispensation, indeed, if in everything man could not help being right.

The doctrine of the "original compact" attracted subsequently the attention of literary as well as political circles throughout Europe, in consequence of the disputes with which every reader of Hume and Rousseau has become familiar. Philosophers discussed and statesmen acted upon a wild fancy which, if it had been entertained by only one man, would have consigned him to Bedlam. We must stoop to conquer. Let us embrace the grand and necessary, though it may be, humiliating axiom of Niebuhr: "That all absolute beginning lies out of the reach of our mental conceptions, which comprehend nothing beyond development and progress," and then the sources of human society will be left, like those of the Nile, not unexplored, but undefined.

Let us dismiss too, not merely as inappropriate, but as utterly idle and mischievous, the kindred investigation

into the natural state of man. Every stage of national life, like every stage of human life, has something of the natural and something of the unnatural in it. The unnatural state *par excellence* is what we call the morbid state of a thing. The natural state, the purely unalloyed condition, is the ideal of the subject in all the phases of healthy progress. Perhaps in all London there will not be found any very near approximation to the ideal of the human kind, certainly it will not be found among the American savages. Yet it was these savages whose noble generosity and shamefully abused hospitality led the dreamy malcontents of a morbid state of society to look upon them as natural men. Honour be to them, and infamy to the civilised scoundrels who requited their magnanimity with insult and death. The savage is far the more natural man than the rascally scum of a large city, but to say that the men of high feeling and education, those who have learnt science and not lost morality, who have cultivated a well balanced mind, not merely a sharp one, to say that these are less natural, in other words, more morbid than the wild men of the woods, is an intoxicating paradox*, excusable in its authors but not in their followers.

was the ardour
of liberty, religion
and civil, a morbid
condition?

oh! oh!

The natural state of man consists in his progress through the stages of life, when he possesses in each the characteristics appropriate to it. The natural state of nations consists in their progress through a series of stages, which we must shortly proceed to trace, when they possess the characteristics appropriate to these respective stages, and the natural government of nations is in each stage of national existence that which best suits the social conditions of that stage.

* Rousseau is fallacious; but so are some of his opponents. Archbishop Whately (edition of Archbishop King's Discourses, p 123) says, "Civilisation is rather the natural state of man, since he has evidently a natural tendency towards it." By a parity of reasoning, old age is the natural state of man, since he has evidently a natural tendency towards it.

It is immaterial how we graduate this progress. We may distinguish it into seven stages, as Shakspeare did human life, or into any other number that pleases us, premising that whatever epochs we may select, it is impossible to define the boundary between any two successive states. The ideas are distinct enough, but the things have no determinate bound of separation. We cannot, as Mr. Burke remarked, draw a line between light and darkness, yet day and night are, upon the whole, tolerably distinct. The gradual dissolution of the past into the present, and the constant but inabrupt realisation of the future, being properties possessed in common by the series of phenomena presented by a national history, and by the series of phases called human life, have given support to the comparison occasionally drawn between the life of states and the life of individuals. They are both examples of the perpetual cycle of germinative florescences, maturity and decay, which is ever revolving around us in all organic nature. No one can mark the moment when infancy ends and boyhood begins; in no diary is recorded the day or even the week when old age manifestly succeeded to the strength of manhood; and when in the lower productions of nature the change of the external appearance seems to draw precisely the line of demarcation between two stages, as in the case of a bud at the moment of opening, a crysalis bursting its shell, the precision is more apparent than real, for a gradual change was going on within the unbroken bud, the butterfly was already developed while we were classing it among grubs. The mistake of supposing that nature operates by jerks, that the breaking of the egg-shell is anything but one link in the chain of a constant development, which has been proceeding within and now must proceed apart from the shell, is never committed by any competent naturalist, but is one of the commonplaces of historians, who earn their bread by startling the reader. The form of government is suddenly and

violently changed, as the egg-shell is suddenly and violently broken; but the preparations for the new government were being conducted while the old one existed apparently uninjured, as the bird has formed its legs while the shell is as perfect as ever.

“ As the sun,
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere; so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events,
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.”

I know no story in which the gradual and secret formation of a new era under the canopy of the old one can be better studied than in De Tocqueville's sketch of the Pre-Revolutionary Régime of France.* The centralisation on which the empire is now firmly erected was the subterranean work which proceeded in the eighteenth century, though nothing appeared above ground but a feudal monarchy. The void in local administration and power which was left when the noblesse migrated to Paris and became a court plutocracy, was filled by the government employés, to whom alone the French peasant looked for any attempt at honest administration. They were the heralds of a centralised empire.

The same subterraneity of advance is to be traced in the progress of thought. For instance, the Reformation and the overthrow of Scholasticism was a great and precise epoch, but the preparations for this bursting into life were being conducted while we were within the husk of scholasticism. Wickliffe and Ockham, the two great avant-couriers of the Reformation, were both scholastics. They wrote in the style in which scholastics wrote, they, especially Ockham, conducted their disputations according to the dialectic rules of the schoolmen, and yet in this shell they were forming the germ of the new civilisation. Of Ockham Degerando† says: “Le nominalisme, alors

* L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution.

† Histoire des Systèmes de Phil. iv. 598.

même qu'il conservait encore les formes extérieures de la philosophie scolastique, l'attaquait dans son essence même et dans son principe de vie, en dissipant le prestige qui avait accordé une valeur absolue et une sorte de puissance magique aux notions abstraites. Il ne lui portait pas un coup moins sensible, et il préparait, par une influence active, quoique lente et secrète encore, la réformation de la science, en donnant le courage, on pourrait dire la témérité, relativement à l'esprit du siècle, de s'affranchir du joug de l'autorité, en provoquant une investigation plus sérieuse du fondement des connaissances humaines, en appelant les méditations des penseurs à s'emparer enfin des questions livrées jusqu'alors aux seules paraphrases des commentateurs ;" and with regard to Wickliffe's *Triologus*, Mr. Turner * remarks : "Its attractive merit was that it combined the new opinions with the scholastic style of thinking and deductions. It was not the mere illiterate reformer teaching novelties whom the man of education disdained and derided, it was the respected academician reasoning with the ideas of the reformer."

Analogies of this kind are among the most interesting proofs of the uniformity of nature ; the larger our field of view, the surer is the resemblance in all grander features of the many examples of nature's cycle ; but in detail there are of course an infinitude of distinctions, and between the life of nations and the life of individuals there is one which it is of the utmost importance ever to bear in mind. In both the order of the phases is regular, but while the duration of each stage of human life is much the same with every individual, the uncertain pace of national progress is one of the most curious and perplexing facts with which we have to deal. At certain times civilisation moves with imperceptible slowness ; at others, it proceeds with astonishing quickness. It lives, if one must find an analogy, though far less marked in human life, at

* Hist. of Eng. ii. 420.

something like the rate at which people rush through life in Spain or New Orleans, as compared with the slow development and decline of an Englishman's frame. It is this variation in degree of rapidity that has led chroniclers (supported doubtless by the dictates of national conceit) to make out for their own communities an absurd antiquity, and to extend the early history of nations to an impossible period. For instance, to seven elective kings of Rome, of whom three perished by a violent death, and the last was expelled after a short reign, a period of 245 years has been assigned. They could not, or would not conceive that the enormous advances made by Rome during the reign of the seven kings, were accomplished in less than two centuries and a half.

Although the further investigation of the origin of society must be abandoned by all who are not content to be overtaken by death in that employment, there is a stage anterior to the first burst of national progress, in which we can perceive the elements of nations yet in the germ, and like perfected but unplanted seeds retaining vitality without change or progress. This is the tribe stage, and is the origin of national progress in the sense of being the state after which national progress begins. Nothing is more interesting than to observe how, from the same branch of the same race, one portion settled itself in a foreign land, and after sanguinary struggles and wars, sometimes even of extirpation, cast its roots deep in the new soil, and growing, as it were there, has passed through a mighty career of civilisation and earned an illustrious memory; and while one was taken, the other was left, and remains at this day the same as at the remote period when its brethren of the same stock began a nation-life. Were their remotest ancestors to rise from the grave, they would find among their posterity the same employments, the same manners, and the same feelings which belonged to the wild dwellers of the wilderness in the times of old. It is somewhat like a phenomenon in intellectual develop-

ment ; some persons, clever as children, remain stationary at the pitch of childish intellectual development, so that all their life they remain what they and others were at ten or seventeen.

Some of the races in the Caucasus, bearing in their features marks of kindred to the best nations of Europe, which are known to have been derived from Asia ; the Arabs of the desert, living now as the conquerors of Cordova and Bagdad lived before they mounted their splendid thrones ; the wild Moslems of Asia Minor, who still show us what the troops of Islam were when they entered Constantinople ; the Tartars, who support a nomad life by hunting or by pasturage, while their brothers, the Huns, are the aristocrats of Hungary, afford instances of the same prenatal state of society in which the Illyrians were while their Doric brethren reigned over the cultivated Peloponnese, and in which our Germanic ancestors were in the days of Tacitus.

It is not easy, except by a large comparison, to distinguish the characteristics which belong essentially to that society, from such as the wild tribes may have borrowed from more civilised neighbours. In proportion as contact with foreigners is less, honour and hospitality are the ruling principles of their conduct. Their personal pride is lofty, loftier than that of the most powerful aristocrat of Europe ; they have no respect for industry as such ; and, each placing his glory in his strength, the law of the strongest prevails whenever strength can be fairly matched with strength, but whoever, acknowledging his weakness, prays the protection of the warrior, will hear no more of the law of the strongest.

To that is owing, not perhaps the origin (for we eschew discussing origins), but certainly the maintenance of the clan spirit. Those who do not themselves compete for supremacy in strength confess their inferiority, and claim protection of one of the most powerful leaders, and they are proud to think their chief the most valiant of human

beings. In this way, to personal prowess is added the political strength derived from a numerous retinue of faithful clients, who owe allegiance and service to the lord, and to whom the lord owes protection.

Now, to us the prenatal state of the materials of nations is of interest only so far as it may support or refute the proposition which through these pages will be kept upon its trial,—that the political decay of a people is a consequence mainly of a moral decay. What are the moral characteristics of the prenatal state? In the one scale we have a noble generosity, open-hearted hospitality, and an honour never broken; in the other, ferocity, improvidence, cunning, rapine, revenge, and robbery. In judging of such a matter, we should be on our guard against the fallacy of attributing to a different state of society from our own, the absence of those evils which we see daily about us, and too hastily believe to be modern accretions; a fallacy which Rousseau most ingeniously supported, and to which a very artificial society is of course the most liable. And we should observe that much of the depravity of modern society existed and does exist in tribe life, and some of that existing among wild tribes has been purged from civilised nations; but yet I think the conclusion to which we must naturally come is, that the morality of the tribe is, as regards the individual, the highest morality known.

For in estimating morality, as historians and politicians, we are not to be guided by any philosophical theories of what is abstractedly right and moral, we may not even take into consideration any precepts of a code of morality which we believe and try to practise ourselves. We are not concerned with what *is* moral, but with what is *thought* moral, and the vital principle of the noble barbarian is never to do an act which he believes wrong. When moral philosophers have once established a code of abstract morality which cannot be gainsaid, it will be instructive to compare the current code of morality

in different ages and nations, and show how each agreed with and deviated from the abstract right. But the statesman has also another study—to note the degree of exactness with which the men of a nation have observed in their practices the rules of right and wrong, as currently believed and interpreted in the nation to which they belong. The first is a study for ascertaining national morality, and must be in a great measure postponed till an abstract unimpeachable standard is agreed upon. The second, or the study of individual morality, requires merely knowledge which we at present possess. The standard of the tribes may or may not be far from the right, but the morality of the individual depends not on the excellence of his standard of right, but on his constant adherence to it. The ferocity, cruelty, robbery, and cunning are not believed by those who practise them, or by the companions among whom they live, to be immoral *, and therefore, as regards each individual, his conduct in these respects has the practical effect that follows moral conduct. The men of a tribe know little else respecting morality, than whether they keep good faith or are habitually base. Now, among the noble tribes who have founded nations, their scorn of a lie is the very essence of their character. Their pledged word is sacred, they live as men who live in the eyes of noble neighbours; well placed confidence is the life-spring of their society, and no act is done which the public opinion of the tribe condemns. Mental reservation, quibbling evasions, and all the petty arts of trading intrigue are discoveries of a later stage of society; craft and stratagem are familiar, but they are the weapons of open warfare, what each must expect from, and what each will practise towards, his avowed enemy, not habits of daily life practised

* His kinsmen did not like Mac Ian “the less because he was a robber, for he never robbed them; and that robbery, merely as robbery, was a wicked and disgraceful act, had never entered into the mind of any Celtic chief.”—*Macaulay, Hist. of England*, iv. 193.

against the innocent unknown, even when not against friends. It is quite true that there are few public virtues known or practised. There is, in fact, no such thing as a state, nor any of that feeling induced among men by the knowledge that in their dealings with each other they are affecting the general community in which they live. Each man regards only his own views and duties, or at least those of the persons related to him by ties of blood or clanship, and if he performs these according to the light that is in him, I know not how he can fail in the comparison with any other class of mankind. "In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes."* An objection will here be urged. Instances are forthcoming of corrupt tribes among whom lying, cheating, and thieving, acts known to be wrong and practised as such, are of daily occurrence.† If I described to such an objector the composition of a seed, would he bring me a withered one to prove me wrong? And here, in tracing the seed of nations, and showing the necessary moral qualities for the founders of nations, is it relevant to tell me that sometimes the stream of morality has been poisoned at the fountain head? The remark would be a refutation only if it could be shown that a corrupt tribe had been the sole founder of a long-enduring and mighty nation.

Most writers on the progress of society distinguish the three successive stages of hunting, pasturage, and agriculture. The first two, however, are compatible with a nomad existence; and the first step towards the foundation of a national society is the settlement of a tribe, its partition of lands, and its recourse to their cultivation for

* Judges, xxi. 25.

† Such an objector would have no scruple to confound the Brazilian cannibals with the old Scandinavians, the Caffres with the Circassians, or the Thracians with the Homeric heroes. Niebuhr has stigmatised the Celtiberians, the Vandals and the Goths, and the modern Albanese, as tribes marked by faithlessness. Niebuhr, H. R. iv. 207, note.

subsistence. This is the first root a nation strikes into the soil. It is manifest that the invasion of a warlike tribe into the land of a more pacific and agricultural people, followed by the total expulsion of the previous occupants, and the conversion of the conquerors into agriculturists, has no other effect than to substitute one tribe for another. No further progress is thereby made towards founding or advancing a nation. As an example of this procedure we may point to the invasion of Norway by the Scandinavian race. The Fins, who previously inhabited it, were expelled to the country now called Finland, and the invaders settled in Norway and became agriculturists. No subsequent invasion has reduced these settlers to be serfs, and formed an upper crust of aristocracy. The peasants themselves have all the high feeling of a conquering and unconquered race, and since the time of Harold Haarfagre in the ninth century, when the small kings were sent forth from Norway to found the aristocracies of Europe, Norway has remained unchanged even by its annexation to Denmark and Sweden, unmoved by any internal readjustments—a democracy of aristocrats. There is scarcely any country on the face of the earth so striking to the imagination of a student of history as this home of the Northmen. By a voyage across the North Sea, or by studying the admirable picture drawn by Mr. Laing with the true genius of an artist who sees far more in his subject than would strike a common observer, we may make ourselves acquainted with one of the finest examples that ever existed of a people in this earliest stage towards national existence. Let us stay for a moment our course down the stream of progress to note some of its characteristics.

The peasantry of Norway have ever lived under udal laws. When, as conquerors, their ancestors first settled there, the land was parcelled out among them, but as there were no subject residents (for the Fins were totally driven out) the conquering owners became cultivators,

they did not become feudal lords, nor were there ever feudal lords to whom they were dependants; to this day their social system remains the same, owing to the division of property among all the sons, the rare necessity for purchasing or selling lands, and the absence of invaders, or of commercial occupations. In the remote glens of the north, the inhabitants "retain the dress, manners, character, and athletic forms which we imagine as belonging to the race of ancient times. . . . There are said to be families which can trace their descent from the days of Harold Haarfagre. . . . One may believe that as the descendants of Rolf Ganger, the great progenitor of William the Conqueror, may be traced to many of the thrones of Europe, those of Rolf's kinsmen who settled in Iceland, while his more ambitious relative steered to the south, may now exist as peaceful Icelandic peasants in the original domiciles of their forefathers, more happy, Deppin supposes, during the thousand years which have elapsed since their ancestors parted on the shores of Norway, than their distant relatives on their thrones. It is at least pleasing to the imagination to see among this class of ancient proprietors the forms of countenances and figures to which we are accustomed, without perhaps having any distinct meaning, to attach the word noble."*

The moral qualities of the Norwegian are exactly those which an aristocracy of birth in its purest state possesses. Honour, which Montesquieu has pointed out as the principle of aristocracies, is the principle of Norwegian society. "Loss of honour has been from the earliest times a specified effective punishment in the criminal law of Norway, standing next in degree to loss of life. . . . The Norwegian peasant has the feeling and proper pride of an independent man, possessed of property, and knowing nothing above him but the law. . . . Among a people whose national character and social condition are so formed, who are scattered in small clusters only over the

* Laing's Norway, pp. 406, et seq.

country, and whose business and occupations are of the most simple kind, the loss of honour is not an unmeaning nominal punishment as it would be among our manufacturing population." *

Now, in such a state of society, there is but one internal cause of movement, over-population. This cause has never been in action in Norway since the ninth century, when the small kings and their followers were expelled from that country and sent forth to found the aristocracies of Europe. The surplus population of such countries, or the warriors of a tribe yet unsettled, cause by invasion the next step in this progress. These invasions to be successful must be made by a people more warlike than the invaded, but the number of the conquerors is often astonishingly small in comparison with that of the conquered. In the times of turmoil and warfare, amid which nations arise, not simply is one fresh layer, but often two, and sometimes more, are placed over the original stratum of the peasant populace. The Saxons, after they had driven the Britons into the fastnesses of Wales, populated England very much in the same way as Norway, after the expulsion of the Fins, was populated by the Scandinavians. The institution of chiefs, which prevails almost universally among tribes, is not discontinued when the tribes become a settled and agricultural people. But between such small kings as they are well termed in Norway, earls or eldersmen as they were called among our Saxon ancestors, between them and the nobles belonging to a conquering race, there is this vital difference—the former are the leaders of a tribe whether wandering or settled; the latter parcel out among themselves the land, and regard the subjugated people settled thereon as only the appurtenances of the land.

The natural tendency of these small kings is of course either for the whole to band themselves together into

* Laing's Norway, p. 231, et seq.

an aristocracy, or for each to erect a separate little kingdom. They are not originally different in blood from the rest of the people, but length of time and absence of intermarriage with the commonalty give these eldersmen a species of nobility, and the spectacle of feudal systems in other countries naturally makes them desire its introduction into their own principalities. Many parts of Germany afford instances of this. The reigning dukes and other little potentates are the exact representatives of the eldersmen, except that length of time has widened the distance between them and their subjects. No subsequent invasion has disturbed their power, and an aristocracy has not grown up around the reigning family. In fact, till lately, the reigning dukes were the real aristocracy of a great part of Germany, and the emperor was the head of the country, elected by these aristocrats. The same would have taken place in Norway, had not Harold expelled all the small kings and made himself sole sovereign of the country. The native Irish king before the Danish and Norman invasion, was a potentate of this description, the "king of the country," chosen by a general assembly of the chiefs of the different provinces, and he took to the nation the same oath that the chiefs of the tribes took to their respective tribes,—that of observing inviolate the ancient laws and hereditary customs. The king's functions were chiefly to lead to war, the public affairs were decided in open-air councils.

In the country south of the Loire, when the original race rose against the invaders and re-conquered the land from them, the native chieftains assumed a seigniorship not unlike that which the invaders had attempted to establish; yet the line was never drawn between the seignior and those below him, as it would have been if the former had been of different race. Thierry says* that south of the Loire there was political life; and notes, as a characteristic trait,

* Hist. de la Conquête de l'Angl. iii. 79.

that satire against the chiefs, whether temporal or spiritual, was never, south of the Loire, a crime of *læsa majestas*.

The erection of a native aristocracy had to some extent taken place in England before the Norman invasion. The earls and princes of the heptarchy were gradually segregating themselves into a compact body and taking all power from the people. The commons, thus stripped in great measure of their political privileges, became indifferent to the nature of their rulers, and this, as has been well observed, is one of the causes of the immediate success which has attended invasion by a handful of warriors. They have to contend only with the clergy and nobility; the mass of the population care little for a change of rulers. Whereas in Norway an invasion would have been met by the rising of the whole populace to defend their possessions. This has been aptly suggested by Mr. Laing* as an explanation of the extraordinary supineness with which, in the middle ages, a few hundred men landing on a coast were allowed to dictate conditions and parcel out the territories of a whole nation,—and the same observation accounts for the weakness of the Belgians and Gauls.†

Hitherto I have spoken chiefly of modern nations, because the earliest history of the ancients is even more confused and indefinite than the history of our Teutonic ancestors. But the species of *coup d'état* which was repeatedly employed to found the aristocracies of Europe, is likewise very distinctly to be observed in the early history of the ancients. The old Homeric monarchies were in fact exactly similar to the small kingdoms established in England, Germany, and the north of Europe. I do not imagine that these Homeric small kings were of a different race from their subjects, they were merely the chiefs of tribes who had settled in the Hellenic territory. These chiefs, like the petty princes of Germany, chose from among them one to be the king of all the tribes; it

* Laing's Norway, 203.

† Niebuhr, H. R. v. 51.

being necessary to the very existence of these separate units as a nation, that there should be one head of the national organisation. As Homer makes his chieftain say: "Let not all of us chieftains assume to be kings, the sovereignty of many is not a good thing: let there be one sovereign, one king, him to whom Jupiter has given the sceptre and the charters of empire, that he may reign over us;"* but this one monarch among monarchs was far from being what we understand by an imperial despot. The great council of the nation in which all the chiefs met was the really ruling power. Peace and war were determined in the council of the Homeric heroes, in the senate of the Sabine and Latin kings, and in the meetings of German chieftains in the royal tent. The public assemblies of the Franks and Lombards, like the Homeric agora are only for the purpose of promulgating the decrees of the kings and nobles, not for giving an opportunity to the assembled commons to put any veto upon them.† The difference is at this period much less between the king and the nobles than between the nobles and the lower class. None except the *ἥρωες*, the *ἡγήτορες ἢ μέδοντες* are called on to address the Homeric assemblies, and Ulysses characterises the *δήμου ἀνὴρ* as *οὔτε ποτ' ἐν πολέμῳ ἐναρίθμιος, οὔτ' ἐνὶ βουλῇ*.‡ Thus the Homeric heroes had segregated themselves from the mass of the people, who owed them allegiance as chiefs very much as the eldermen of the Anglo-Saxons, or the dukes of Germany. They lost their power for perhaps the same reason as the former,—the carelessness of the people whether they changed masters or not. The Dorian invasion was a *coup d'état* precisely similar to the abortive attempt of the Danes, and the successful stroke of the Normans.

* οὐ μὲν πως πάντες βασιλεύσομεν ἐνθάδ' Ἀχαιοί·
οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,
εἷς βασιλεὺς, ᾧ ἔδωκα Κρόνου παῖς ἀγκυλομήτεω
σκηπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφίσιν ἐμβασιλεύῃ.—*Il.* ii. 203, sqq.

† Grote, *H. of Greece*, ii. 93.

‡ *Iliad*, ii. 202.

CHAP. V.

THE FORMATION OF ARISTOCRACIES.

"The world is a great wilderness, wherein mankind have wandered and jostled one another about from the creation. Some have removed by necessity, and others by choice. One nation has been fond of seizing what another was tired of possessing, and it will be difficult to point out the country which is to this day in the hands of its first inhabitants."—BOLINGBROKE.

THE simple idea of a fundamental aristocracy is that of a body of men of the same race, language, pursuits, feelings, tastes, and rights, settled as masters in a land where dwells also another population inferior in energy, character, and power.

There are two ways in which this duplicity of population arises, either by invasion of the superior race, or by immigration of the inferior. The Normans invaded the land of the Anglo-Saxons, the Dorians that of the Laconians, the Megarians that of the Mariandynians, the Ionians that of the old Atticans, the Lucumones that of the primitive Tuscans, the Franks that of the Gauls and their earlier conquerors; and each of these conquering tribes became an aristocracy by right of the sword: or, being in undisturbed possession of the land, tribes like the ancestors of the Roman patricians and the Eupatridæ of Athens invite or tolerate peaceful settlers from other places, on terms dictated by the original inhabitants.

Either course draws the broad line between aristocrats or patricians on the one hand, and the common serfs or

plebeians on the other, but there is of course an infinity of little distinctions caused by the difference in the origin of this relation. In invasions the conquerors generally can impose their own terms, however harsh, upon their subjects; in cases where the subjects immigrate, the terms offered must not be such as to deter the immigrating people, though often a weak and peaceful tribe will readily submit to the severest terms from one spoiler, rather than be the prey for which a dozen spoilers contend.

In the result it generally signifies little which branch of the population was first on the soil, for the higher race ever tries to extend the privileges which it has won or reserved to itself, and the other seeks a gradual emancipation from the yoke which necessity, or a preference among necessities, imposed upon them. This simplifies our view immensely, for to all practical purposes we shall be correct in saying that the first scene of the drama of national life opens with the settlement of a few conquerors in the land of a subjugated people, whom, with the land of which they are considered little else than the live stock, the conquerors parcel out among themselves according to the feudal maxim, "*Nulle terre sans seigneur.*" This is, in the history of separate nations, the point of departure which historians who aim at exactness generally select. Before that crisis, the records of the prenatal existence present to the despondent inquirer an unwieldy mass, respecting which it may reasonably be doubted whether we should most lament the vagueness of the whole, or the manifest falsehood of the greater part.

A striking characteristic attracts to the memory of the invaders all that admiration which we feel for those who have been an object of fear to others, and whom time alone prevents from inspiring fear in ourselves. A small horde of men receives the homage of a nation of subjects. Their inferiority in number is compensated by their su-

perior energy and martial spirit. **Ἀριστοί* means the most valorous, the bravest ; an aristocracy is, in its origin, nothing else but the rule of the bravest. They called the early aristocrats of Greece the sons of the God of Strength (Heracleidæ). In fact, the conquering tribesmen place each his glory in his prowess and his honour. Settling among a people comparatively enervated by the drudgery of peaceful occupations, and degraded frequently by the yoke which we have shown to have been gradually established over them by their own chieftains, the conquerors of these chieftains stride through the land with the pride of men who have never submitted to a master, who, under the gods, acknowledge none but equals or inferiors. They bear, too, fresh from their simple homes, the feelings of personal independence, self-respect, and unblemished honour, which have been already pointed out as the characteristics of the noble tribes who are fitted to play a part in the formation of nations. And something there is in the very possession of superiority which, though it may often give rise to insolence and cruelty towards the subject race, raises the self-respect of the conquerors in their dealings with one another ; and now, settled as in a camp among subjects who would oust them if they could, they feel the first rudiments of mutual dependence and public duty, even though that duty may regard only the relations of the conquerors among themselves. Language has preserved the name of some of these tribes, to denote in later ages the possessors of the moral qualities which distinguished them in the eyes of their contemporaries. The Franks were the invaders of France when the Gauls and decaying Romans forgot their old animosities in yielding together to the yoke of the more valiant German tribe. The subjugated people spoke of a Frank as of a man who possessed an open generous mind and disdained deceit ; and we, too, after all distinct traces of the tribe have melted away in the general amalgamation of the elements out of which the French

nation is formed, pay yet an unconscious tribute to the lofty character of the old conquerors, when, to denote a man who knows no fraud or covin, we say that he is "frank." **Ἀριστοι*, too, which meant etymologically the bravest*, the sons of **Ἄρης*, the God of War, was used in the later ages of Grecian life to signify the best,—a meaning which had been conveyed originally to those who were accustomed to see superiority in prowess generally combined with uprightness of character.

In the dark and half-recorded ages of lawlessness and turmoil, amid which nations have their birth, it should be no just occasion for surprise if land once, or even twice invaded, should still tempt the cupidity of the brigand wanting to become a noble. Not by one invasion only were the elements of Grecian society introduced on Grecian land, nor by a single inroad only from the forests of Germany and the North were the nations of Europe founded. Pelasgians, Illyrians, Siceli, and other bands of marauders whose names figure but darkly in the prehistoric time of Grecian and Italian life, each a fresh layer of society, burst in and subdued the former conquerors, and depressed still lower the original possessors of the soil. So in the middle ages, Saxon, Lombard, Frank, Dane, Norman, came in fierce succession to graft their private interest on the public weal of half-formed communities.

Warlike ~~immigrations~~ migrations take place, of course, whenever the population of a tribe exceeds the means of subsistence, and when, instead of changing their mode of life, for instance, by resorting to the expedient of agriculture, which would support a far larger number of men on the same land that is insufficient for them as pasture, the young and enterprising prefer to quit for ever the homes of their fathers, and conquer principalities for themselves.†

* The old Latin for soldier, *miles*, came in the middle ages, after the Lombard invasion, to signify gentleman rather than soldier. Sismondi, Rep. Ital. i. 62.

† Mr. Laing says, the singular phenomenon of the Anglo-Saxons in

But all does not depend on the invaders. The Saracens who overran Spain, the Turks who seized some of the fairest provinces of Europe, were substantially like the Teutonic hordes, but neither succeeded in founding a nation; for, to found a nation, not merely the repeated influx of warlike hordes, but some common sympathies and ties by which they may gradually fuse and intermingle, seem to be required. A broad distinction of race and religion, such as is conspicuous between the two invading tribes I have just mentioned and their subjects, has been in those instances at least a bar to that amalgamation and union of elements, without which a social community has none but a verbal existence. The Moorish potentates had established a sort of feudal domination in Spain, and after the death of Hisham III., in 1031, a sheikh or baron sprang up in every city; tribe quarrelled with tribe, and district with district. Hence the population rose, but, being aliens by a broad distinction of race and of religion, they would not take either the crown or the aristocracy for their champion. The difference of race and of religion inspired them with an equal hatred of the monarch and the barons, and they rose with one accord to expel the Moor and vindicate the cross.

There are two courses open to the conquerors of an alien race. Either, (1.) they may expel it as the Norwegian expelled the Fins who belonged to that Celtic family which had overspread Europe before the Gothic tribes left Asia. In that case the invaders become peasant proprietors, and lose few of the qualities they brought with them to their new possessions. Or, (2.) they may, as did the Turks at Constantinople, the Saracens in Spain, the Thessalians in the lands of the Penestæ, the Tartars

the 8th century leaving a better soil and country in the duchies to seek land and subsistence in England, can only be accounted for by some great submergence of the lands they occupied, or by the invasion from the East of some more warlike people. Laing's Denmark, p. 162.

in China, the Parthians in Persia, and as the Helvetians * attempted in Gaul, reduce the original inhabitants to cultivate the land for them and pay them tribute. In that case the conquerors live in a rude splendour and luxury and an idleness relieved only by military exploits, and which without them, soon enervates the masculine spirits and the hardy frames that won the rich prize. In the history of the Gothic invasions of Italy, this sudden enervation of a conquering tribe frequently excites the reader's surprise. Seizing not the humble fields of rude cultivators, such as the Britons, the Gauls, or the Fins ; but finding themselves masters of wealthy cities, replete with a money-getting and cowardly population, who were ready to pay tribute for protection against other spoilers, the Lombard tribes successively melted away their stern iron nature in the lap of soft luxury where they had enthroned themselves. The new races, coming fresh from their rude camp-like homes, knew little distinction between their Teutonic kinsmen and the degenerate Romans.† They conquered them with equal ease ; but seduced by the sudden acquisition of riches, the soldiers deserted the standard of their leaders to enjoy their wealth. Thus severed and soon enervated, they afforded as ready a prey as their predecessors for a new invader. The same softness of manners has crept over the races which have been successively dominant in France. The Celts whom the Greeks considered so rashly and madly brave, as to fear neither earthquake nor ocean, after they had been a while settled in France succumbed to the Teutonic invader, who was braced by his constant warfare. And

* On the emigration of the Helvetians for the purpose of founding an aristocracy, see Niebuhr, H. R. v. 47, 48.

† The Romans generally evacuated the places in which the Lombards settled, so that the Lombard invasion is not parallel to that of the Turks, for the subject race fled ; nor is it similar to the Norwegian, for the subject race in Italy was wealthy and dwelt in towns, and left their conquerors the knowledge of the arts of peace and much of their wealth.

in their turn these Sicambrian warriors fell away. Though they at first lived apart in haughty disdain from the Celtic Gauls whom they conquered, yet in less than three centuries the descendants of the conquerors became almost Gauls ; and when, in the beginning of the eighth century, the Franks from the territory between the Rhine and the Meuse invaded the provinces of their kinsmen, the warriors who placed their glory in their strong arm and their fiery steeds, felt no measured contempt for the soft nobles who had retired into towns and drove along the streets in bullock waggons. And two centuries later the contempt of the Carlovingian princes was excited by the southern nobles who came in the train of Constance, daughter of the Count of Toulouse, on her marriage with Robert, king of France, in 999 A.D., and betrayed the addiction to luxury which the Carlovingians had been accustomed to associate in their minds with cowardice and inferiority. It became a proverb, "*Franci ad bella, Provinciales ad victualia.*" And so the earliest Norman invaders of Ireland soon found the harper a necessity of their banquet, and preferred the song and the dance to tournaments and manly games ; and even laying aside their Norman names, they became so assimilated in habits, customs, and demeanour to the Celts whom they had conquered, that in the second generation the two races could not be distinguished.

It by no means follows from the consanguinity of the tribes who may successively invade a country that they are inspired by any of those feelings which we ordinarily expect to be produced by a knowledge of ancient brotherhood, for in most cases the different manner in which they have lived since their ancestors first parted has produced so great a diversity in their customs, and even in their language, that the new immigrants are considered in every respect foreigners. This was the case with the Dorians who, originally of the same stock as the *Æolians*, had retained in their native fastnesses the rude simple

habits which, by the time of the Peloponnesian war, the Æolians had exchanged for the more polished manners acquired during their progress in civilisation. These two kindred tribes, when they came into collision, regarded each other as foreigners; though once the ancestors of Ionians, Dorians, Achaïans, Æolians, and Bœotians had lived as the same people and spoken the common Hellenic tongue. So Saxons, Angles, Jutes, Danes, and Normans all belonged to the Teutonic stock, of which they spoke each a different dialect. When the Normans invaded England, the Danish inhabitants looked upon them as of a foreign race (*Romani seu Francigeni*), and sent to Denmark for assistance, and some Danes came over from Denmark for the purpose of avenging the slaughter of their kinsman Harold and his followers slain in battle by the Franks.* After the amalgamation between Normans and Saxons had commenced, the Scandinavians abandoned all connection with England. This dates from about 1086; after that the English are always spoken of in the Danish laws as a people wholly foreign, owing mainly to the difference in the language caused by the adoption of some of the French words.†

These outbranching kinsmen when, after many wanderings, they met as strangers on common ground, no longer equals, but in the various degrees of authority or subordination, the result of the several conquests in which they had won or lost, have at last formed by their fusion the English nation, as from the fusion of their dialects has arisen the English language.

Language, indeed, the most enduring monument of social changes, carries down into the late ages, when the elements of society have coalesced and forgotten their

* "Ad ulciscendam consanguinei necem, Haroldi scilicet a Francigenis interempti, et Angliam pristinae libertati restituendam."—*Script. Rer. Danic.* iii. 254.

† See quotations from the *Sagan af Gunnlaugi* in Thierry, ii. 284 sq.

ancient differences, the unmistakable traces of the former coexistence in marked distinction of a serf and a dominant population. Seldom has the conquering people succeeded in imposing its language on the serf masses; but it has often been the cause of introducing into the language, which is the result of the commixture of the two dialects, a double set of words or phrases for the same idea. So that in the use of his native tongue, the Italian frequently has the choice of expressing himself after the manner of the Lombards or of the Romans,—the old Romans themselves had in many cases synonyms from two stocks—the *Æolic* and the *Sabine*,—and we select our words unconsciously from the vernacular of the *Anglo-Saxon churl*, or the courtly language of the *Norman baron*. In the end the dialect of the subject nation generally vindicates itself against the conquerors. The Normans and the Sabines, few in number in comparison with the Saxons and the Latins, eventually came to speak, but with slight admixture from their own store, the language of their serfs. It is curious, however, to observe that the words adopted from the conquerors are chiefly political and military. It is an observation of Niebuhr * (the correctness of which has, without substantial reason, been controverted), that all words relating to war and the chase are of *Sabine* origin, while those which refer to tillage and home life are from the *Æolic* or old *Latin* dialect. A recent author of deserved popularity† has made a similar remark, that the Saxons named the board, the ox, cow, sheep, plough; but the dressed beef, veal, venison, are all *Norman*, and so are the words denoting all articles employed in the chase or personal ornament.

The tendency of each invasion is to establish the broad division into two classes, the dominant and the serf; but in the case of repeated invasions, the old dominant class, or if there be no previous invasion, the class of native chieftains does not sink entirely to the level of its former

* Hist. of Rome, i. 32.

† Trench, Study of Words, p. 64.

subjects, but receives at the hand of its conquerors a sort of subaltern rank. Thus the *Senatus Populusque Romanus* was a compromise between the old ἄριστοι and the chief men of the Latins. The Sabines formed the senators, the *populus* were the old Latin leaders; the plebs, the mass of the lower Latins, having at this early stage no political existence. So the minor barons of the Norman constitution included some of the principal men of the country before William's invasion, and the περίοικοι of the Spartan constitution have been with great reason supposed to be either the conquerors in a prior invasion, or the native chieftains of the Helot populace.

The original relation of the conquerors among themselves is immaterial to their position in their new settlements, however low they may have been in their native country, they are all nobles so far as the subject people are concerned. The Sabine clients became Roman patricians; William's personal attendants found themselves, after crossing the channel, English noblemen.

What is the first step after the conquest is accomplished, and a line, not to be crossed for ages, drawn between aristocrat and serf? For a living example of a previous stage in social progress we pointed to Norway, for an instance of the present we may refer to a constitution of antiquity, celebrated as much for the political sagacity of its founder as for a long duration, the more remarkable from the rapid transitions of the states around it. The constitution of Lycurgus has sometimes been called a democracy, at others an aristocracy, and more often a mixture of the two, with a slight monarchical ingredient. Had politicians but imitated the example of anatomists and studied their subject comparatively, not only would the Spartan system have been freed from the common reputation of being an odd anomaly among governments, but it would have been selected for special study as the most perfect example of a type which has often

recurred. The origin of the Lacedæmonian legislature was the conflict which arose, soon after the settlement of the Dorians in Laconia, between the elective kings and the uncrowned members of the conquering race ; and the object of the laws of Lycurgus was to preserve the nation precisely in that state into which it entered at the moment of the Dorian conquest. The dominant race, the *ἄριστοι*, were the sovereign power of the state ; if one desires, therefore, to class this constitution under either of the three ordinary forms, there is no other alternative but to call it, with Plato *, an aristocracy. They had earned their possessions by warlike habits, and it was the object of the legislature to continue this military life, to keep them from amalgamating with the subject populace, to prevent their enervation by luxury, in short to maintain the character they originally possessed, that of an invading army, settled in the lands of an agricultural and less hardy people. We know the character that was formed,—cruel to their subjects, noble just and generous among themselves, the Spartans passed their lives in being trained for warriors. Their object was not to invade their neighbours, but to remain the chief of the Grecian races ; not blended like the Dorians at Sicyon, Corinth, Argolis, and Messenia, with those whom they had conquered, nor by the soft seductions of the arts of peace preparing themselves to be the prey of a future invasion. The conquered race were wholly employed in agriculture, which the Spartans disdained. They were divided into 1, Perioici ; a class probably composed of the chief persons among the Achæan, who were allowed to live in peace upon their estates, but wholly excluded from political power ; and 2, the Helots, who were reduced to complete serfdom. Like the villains of the middle ages, they belonged to the soil (*ascripti glebæ*), and were not allowed to enrich them-

* Leg. iv. p. 712.

selves by handicrafts, or indulged with any means of alleviating their degraded condition.

In the prehistoric regime, already illustrated by reference to the Homeric poems, it has been observed that the nation in fact consists of an aggregate of tribes or clans, each totally independent of the other, till their chieftains in council agree to elect one head of the whole nation. Now a similar adjustment is made afterwards by the invading race, but with this important difference, that whereas before the introduction of a feudal dominion the broad line of distinction is not so much between the chiefs on the one hand and their clansfolk on the other, as between the several clans, counting the chiefs as merely the headmen of their tribes. On the contrary, after the invasion and the establishment of a feudal relation, such as that effected by the Dorians in the Peloponnese, the northern tribes in modern Europe, and the Mahrattas in India, the aristocrats are all of one race, and banded together among themselves by that inseparable tie. They take to themselves large tracts of lands, and as incident thereto the serfs, "*ascripti glebæ*," who acknowledge them severally for their lords. The line is thus drawn between aristocrats and serfs. The whole sovereignty resides in the former. Each baron is perfectly independent of his fellows, but the necessity of combination among themselves to keep down the subject people is an additional stimulus to the desire for unity and centralisation, even national existence, which had urged the independent small kings of the previous regime to erect a common head. The monarch, for example the Roman, the Etruscan*, is at first elected by the barons assembled, and this election would be some ground for the supporting of the "Original Contract," if it were not that the parties to the election are the king and the barons

* Niebuhr, H. R. i. 123.

alone; the people who figure in the original contract having no place in the election.* Royalty is always in this stage of society but the chief of the federated feudal principalities; the king is but first among his peers (*primus inter pares*). France during the Carolingian and Merovingian periods, and down to the times of Louis XL, was in fact entirely governed by the feudal aristocracy. There were *pays d'obéissance-le-roi*, *pays des barons*, and *pays hors l'obéissance-le-roi*. The very slight degree in which the reigning baron was elevated from his fellows is illustrated by Philip I. king of France, in 1102 buying land and doing homage to the Count de Saucerne, the king to his subject. In Spain, till the time of its greatness, the monarch was merely the most eminent of the feudal powers. The Emperor of Germany was but an elected sovereign, originally one of the aristocrats who elected him. The system became complicated by reason of incursions of the French, the Romans, and the Slaves. In Saxony, for instance, the emperor was obliged to appoint a noble or chief of the noblesse to head the army. It is an axiom, says Mirabeau †, “dans les diverses possessions de la singulière aristocratie germanique que le prince n'est que *primus inter pares* parmi les nobles qui forment dans chaque pays les états auxquels des événemens postérieurs ont fait admettre les villes dans un rang subordonné, et cet axiome est fondé sur les faits.” These generals, dukes, or dukes, soon made their office hereditary, establishing in fact a little kingdom. In England the power of the Norman king was much greater than in continental countries. A considerable portion of the landed property in England had passed through the hands of William the Conqueror,

* On the election of the Lombard kings in Italy, see Sismondi, Rep. Ital. i. 67, all free men were allowed to be present; not for the purpose of taking part in the deliberations or the election, but for the sake of publicity, that they might well know whom they were to obey.

† Monarch. Pruss. iv. 2.

and was granted on his own terms. The Spartan system presents a very curious example of the retention by the military aristocracy of the right to elect their monarchs. By a series of ingenious checks they frustrated every attempt of those elected to convert the monarchical into a separate and powerful element of society. Indeed the internal jealousy of the Doric race drove them to an extraordinary shift. They feared to elect any one of themselves to assume that central dominion which was needed for the good order and unity of the nation, and they therefore sought their sovereigns from the subject race, for the best traditions concur in representing the two kings (*βασιλῆς*, doubled as a check against the erection of monarchy,) to have been Achæans, not Dorians.

On the Spartan system we therefore make two observations: First, that it is an example of the first stage of society after the superposition of a dominant over a serf race, which marks the commencement of a national existence. It is an example above all worthy of study for those who desire to possess themselves with a full knowledge of the spirit and principles of such a society, because the circumstances of the time and people afforded few of the disturbing causes which in other examples have frequently confounded the spectator. It likewise had the advantage, owing to its continuance during the times of Ionian literature, of being described by some of the master minds of Athens, who saw it in their own day in action. The second point to which attention should be called, is the singular foresight of the legislators. Their object was to stereotype the state of society, and to prevent the growth of that progress which it will be our business in other instances to trace. And as far as human power could effect it, they did stop all progress. The Lacedæmonian nation remained in its first stage, with scarcely any modification, till it was destroyed by Augustus. The dominant Spartans adhered to the laws of their legislator, and kept themselves for ages, by the

most rigorous discipline and devotion to the state, free from all causes of enervation, and able to put down the revolutions of Helots with as strong an arm as that with which their ancestors had conquered the old inhabitants of Laconia. Some luxury and degeneracy at last crept in; money and the love of it were introduced by **Lysander***; the Spartan race by never admitting a new family into their number, gradually dwindled: they were compelled to hire mercenaries for their wars, and at last the final blow was given to this long-enduring constitution by the admission of the perioici to full civil rights. But by that time the character of all the classes in the state had degenerated, and it never entered on the career of national progress, but perished in the general destruction of Grecian nationalities by the Romans. Had the early rulers of every nation been as longsighted and as patiently obeyed as the Spartans, all mankind would have lived for ever under rigid aristocracies, so that the world may congratulate itself that the legislators of other nations have possessed the gift of not foreseeing the future.

The points in which the Spartans differed from the normal condition of that stage of society, were chiefly in the checks imposed by the legislator on the elements of change for instance in the ephors and the senate, whose duty it was to prevent the king from assuming that absolute power which sovereigns are usually supposed to desire, and in the spirit of devotion to the interests of the state, which was inculcated on every Spartan, and observed by most of them, so that the Spartans did not settle into separate baronies, each a little nucleus for a crowd of subjects, but remained, like their first ancestors who won Laconia, for ever living a camp life.

The native chieftains of tribes are not only the leading warriors, but often the chief officiating persons at the

* Xenoph. *Repub. Lac.* c. 14. Grote, *Hist. Greece*, ix. 322. On the deep degeneracy of Sparta in the time of Xanthippus, see Niebuhr, iii. 589.

public prayers and sacrifices. This we know to have been the case with the reigning Homeric βασιλεῖς, and the same sacred duties appear, with scarcely less certainty, to have been in part performed by the German chieftains. "*Nobilitas*" in some of the early Teutonic tribes, consisted in a descent from Odin, and the reigning barons (βασιλεῖς), who had evidently been originally elected by their fellows, when they had made their supremacy hereditary, fabled that their ancestors received the sceptre from Ζεὺς himself. The divine right of kings was an early production of inventive man. This notion of godlike descent laid down for the leaders of the tribes a fixed line of demarcation from the general herd. It is difficult to conceive how it was first introduced, but it remained in great vitality before the introduction of Christianity among the Saxons. The seven kingdoms of this island were never ruled by any but the descendants of Odin. After the conversion of the Saxons, the chiefs ceased to consider warlike enemies as entitled to the first place in their estimation, but, says Thierry*, the successors of Hengst, Horse, Kerdic, Ælle and Ide, no longer wielded the battle axe and surrounded themselves with a train of warriors, but betook themselves to founding monasteries and obtaining the favour of the Pope. At the consecration of a monastery, the chiefs and the bishops, with the king and his family in their centre, assembled as for a national ceremony. Subsequently the good understanding between Rome and the Saxon chiefs was broken off, and at the conquest the Norman clergy seized on the sacred offices of the conquered chieftains. Naturally, on all occasions, after the invasion of a superior race, the high offices of state-religion are usurped by the conquerors. And herein may perhaps be found one of the causes why the Mussulman conquerors of Christian countries failed in effecting a sufficient coalition with their

* Conquête d'Angl. i. 94.

subjects to found national bodies. Races originally one, like the Dorians and Æolians, possessed the same groundwork of religious belief, the differences were comparatively trifling, and the rites of the superior tribe were often adopted by their subjects; the previous invaders had sometimes embraced a new religion, as the Franks and Lombards, while the Scandinavians retained their old paganism, till, conquering their Christian kinsmen, they adopted their new religion, but Moslem and Christian could never unite.*

Those who have reflected on the prevailing thoughts and feelings of these early ages, will easily perceive the enormous increase of power acquired by aristocrats, who became also pontiffs. The human mind, undisciplined by science, abandoned to the uncontrolled influence of a lively imagination, ever active in bestowing an existence on any cause of fear, recognises force, the immediate result of will, as the direct cause of every event. Force and uncontrolled will in human affairs have become associated in the minds of the people with the action of the invaders to whose brute power they have yielded, whose orders and wishes they obey. If to this is added the idea that these men are likewise in direct communication with the unknown power by which the universe is moved at will, religious awe is added to personal fear, and respect for these superior beings becomes a fixed sentiment in the minds of the subject populace. Accordingly, in proportion as the professions of priest and warrior are more closely combined, their tenure of

* The bigotry of the Spanish character was the effect of a war between races who made a difference of creed their watchword. The inquisition would never have been a Spanish institution but for the Mahometan conquest, which implanted a devotion to one faith so strong in the Spanish character that the love of persecuting, confined originally to persecuting Jews and Mahometans, at last became a generalised love of persecuting every one not orthodox according to the Spanish standard.

power is the less precarious. The reigning baron is by right of his supremacy allowed the first place at the public sacrifices. He is the chief pontiff, and in the struggle which later ensues between the crowned head and the barons, not the least effectual means for stripping the latter of the prestige they acquire by this connection with sacred duties, is the retention by the monarch of the head-place in the religion of the state, and the distribution of ministerial duties to a class of ecclesiastics who are independent of the aristocrats. The Norman king filled all the priestly offices with Normans as a preventive against the commons, and as many of them as he could he filled with his court-chaplains, as a preventive against the barons.

In the broad outline these changes are marked, each by the unvarying characteristics of its species. But in detailed histories the simplicity of these social adjustments soon goes out of sight when one finds, for instance, in one country, patches of different strata on the surface, not reduced for ages to the common level of subjection to a central power. The historian of France is embarrassed by the conquests and reconquests, the establishment and the rejection of feudality, which took place, each in a dozen different degrees, in the little principalities, by the union of which the kingdom was eventually formed. And we, too, in reading the history of our own country have no simple tableau opened to our view under the title of the Norman conquest. It was effected piecemeal, and when the broad distinction of Norman conquerors, and conquered Angles, Danes, and Saxons was at length established in England, in the highlands of Scotland the prenational form of society remained down to the close of the seventeenth century. The sole tie of union was the tie of the clan; and the chieftain, so far from being a member of any upper caste, was but the headman of the clan, and waged fitful wars with every other clan and every other chief; while the people, who preferred agriculture to the rewards of a successful trial

of strength, maintained, amid their rude life and their cruel and predatory warfare, the high and noble bearing of a people who had never succumbed to a superior, and who disdained the paltry arts of deceit. It is curious to observe how these native chieftains were gradually absorbed into the English aristocracy. They who would, on the complete annexation of Scotland, have formed in any other system a class of *περίαιτοι*, in England were called earls*, and in a generation or two all but their clansmen forgot that they were not of Norman blood. How different, too, from England was the condition of Wales, where the descendants of unconquered Britons at length saw their old enemies yield before a stronger race. Feudality, or the imposition of a conquering tribe, need not therefore be spread over a whole kingdom in order to make it enter upon the usual course of national progress, but apparently feudality must be so far established as to call into being a powerful class of aristocrats, alien by race from the people (or at least believing themselves to be so), and jealous of each other's supremacy. Quasi-feudality is often established or attempted by the central native chieftain who, to outstrip the jealousy of his compeers, encourages foreigners, and erects a sort of foreign functionarism throughout the kingdom. This was in some measure tried by the old Scottish kings, who courted Saxon immigrants, and gave them place and power, and went so far as to discard their native language.†

Had the Norman conquest not taken place what would have been the result? England would not have existed, but our island would have been, like Scandinavia, divided into three kingdoms, holding little communion with, and bearing no good will towards each other—the Anglian kingdom, the Welsh, and the Scottish. We should have

* See the case of the O'Donnel, Macaulay, *Hist. of England*, iii. 671.

† Thierry, *Hist.* ii. 65.

been split and severed into these divisions, or perhaps more like the states of Germany. On the other hand, had the Normans, abandoning the doctrine of primogeniture, come earlier, before the Anglo-Saxons had made any considerable advance in civilisation and had established among themselves fixed gradations of rank, we should probably have seen in our country as severe and rigid a distinction between noble and roturier as was maintained in France with such calamitous consequences to the close of the eighteenth century.

Aristocracies, if founded so as to endure, form the first great epoch in national progress ; but sometimes, after an aristocracy has been founded, the conquered have risen against their lords and expelled them. This was accomplished in Spain, though after a long period of subjection to the Arabs. In Egyptian history something of the same nature may be traced. A shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians, a feeling which Dr. Milman suggests to have been derived from the fact that " while Egypt was rapidly advancing in splendour and prosperity, a fierce and barbarous Asiatic horde burst suddenly upon her fruitful provinces, destroyed her temples, massacred her priests, and having subdued the whole of Lower Egypt, established a dynasty of six successive kings. These Hyksos, or royal shepherds, with their savage clans, afterwards expelled by the victorious Egyptians, Monsieur Champollion thinks, with apparent reason, that he recognises on many of the ancient monuments. A people with red hair, blue eyes, and covered only with an undressed hide, loosely wrapped over them, are painted sometimes struggling in deadly warfare with the natives, more usually in attitudes of the lowest degradation which the scorn and hatred of their conquerors could invent. They lie prostrate under the footstools of the kings, in the attitude described in the book of Joshua, where the rulers actually set their feet on the necks of the captive kings. The common people appear to have taken pride in having the figures

of these detested enemies wrought on the soles of their sandals, that they might be thus perpetually trampled on." *

The consequence of expelling an aristocracy is substantially to recall the nation to the state in which it was at the time when the aristocracy introduced itself; to throw it, as it were, back in the course of national progress. Though, if the conquerors were at all civilised and artistic, they leave their knowledge and their arts to the country from which they are driven, as the Arabs did to Spain, not grateful for the inheritance, and by cultivating these arts and the other occupations which, as we shall hereafter see, tend to the advancement of nations in the national progress, it is possible for them to arrive at the later stages of development, though shorn of an aristocracy and all its accompaniments. This was not the case in all parts of Spain, for when its foreign conquerors were gone, there was established, by large grants of land, a native aristocracy. But the inhabitants of the Basque provinces, where there were no such nobles, are, like the Norwegians, warlike and chivalrous. Every one is a noble provided he is free from Jewish or Moorish taint, as all the Norwegians are noble if free from Finnish taint.

The impulse which induces warlike tribes to leave their old over-populated homes and their sluggish monotonous lives to conquer new lands and the cultivators of these lands is sufficiently intelligible; but a feeling of surprise naturally arises, that some particular epochs in the world's history should be marked out by a rapid succession of these armed migrations, insomuch that people seem to have been doing nothing else but conquering or being conquered, while centuries, happily for civilisation, elapse without one of them taking place, though the same cause of migration—over-population in the mountains whence these tribes emanate—is constantly recurring.

The explanation, which I believe to be the true one, is

* Milman's Hist. of the Jews, i. 48.

painfully unromantic. When the inhabitants of the plains are rude and uncivilised, the descending mountaineers, or the invading sea-kings, can obtain no sustenance in the plains by labour or peaceful employment, and so are forced to get a mastery over the peasants who dwelt there before, and compel them to pay tribute out of the produce of their land for their masters' maintenance. Thus they form aristocracies. But in times of civil industry, and when the increasing arts and employments of peaceful life afford an enlarged field for occupation, the superfluous population of wild untamed districts may still descend upon the plains ; no longer as conquerors, but as servants. The superfluous Swiss became mercenaries, or couriers, or fancy carvers for the rest of Europe ; the superfluous Asturians became hewers of wood and drawers of water in Madrid, and are the valets and cooks of Spain.* Both these tribes are hardy, mountain-bred, honest, and warlike ; the Asturians especially, are jealous of their honour, and above a sordid action ; and if the rest of Europe were peopled by a sparse peasantry, these races would, without doubt, instead of being servants and mercenaries, have founded as proud and noble aristocracies as any that the world has ever seen. It is the fault of their neighbours, not of themselves, that, instead of being a storehouse of nobles, their mountains are a storehouse of cooks. If you feel shocked at this near comparison of heroes to hodmen, ask the elegant Lord Chesterfield his opinion, and he will tell you that the two are near akin, and that Homer's heroes talk like a pack of porters.†

* Ford's Handbook, p. 695. Quart. Rev. lxii. p. 128.

† Chesterfield, Letter ccii.

CHAP. VI.

THE NATIONAL PROGRESS AFTER ARISTOCRACY IS FOUNDED.

"Nostra respublica non unius esset ingenio, sed multorum; nec una hominis vita, sed aliquot constituta sæculis et ætatibus."—CICERO.

MONTESQUIEU says of the stern government we sketched in the last chapter, that it was a mixture of aristocracy and of monarchy, having this inconvenience, that the subjects were slaves. It was a good government which had within it the capacity of becoming better.*

It will be our object in this chapter to trace the first step towards what Montesquieu considered its melioration. There are at this time three secular powers in the state : the crown, the aristocracy, and the commons. The second generally possesses the sovereign power, the monarch being only the head of the nobles, entrusted with that part of the executive which can be performed better by a single person than by an assembly. The commons are of two classes, a few men who are free, though not possessing full civil rights ; and the bulk of the people, who are serfs.

As many as six courses have been adopted. First : The hereditary reigning family dies out, or by aristocratic influence is expelled ; or, if the sovereign has been elected, the habit of election ceases, and the aristocrats resume that portion of their power which they originally en-

* *Esp. des Lois*, lib. xi. c. 8.

trusted to the reigning family. This in itself causes no advance in the national progress, although an advance may happen to be simultaneously proceeding by the rise of the commons, but as yet they have not sufficient power to have a voice in public affairs. This resumption of complete power by the aristocracy took place all over Greece, Sparta proving almost, if not quite, the only exception. "Kingship was abolished, and an oligarchy took place, a council deliberating collectively, deciding general matters by the majority of voices, and selecting some individuals of their own body as temporary and accountable administrators. It was always an oligarchy which arose on the defeasance of the heroic kingdom; the age of democratical movement was yet far distant, and the condition of the people—the general body of freemen—was not immediately altered, either for better or worse, by the revolution; the small number of privileged persons, among whom the kingly attributes were distributed and put in rotation, being those nearest in rank to the king himself, perhaps members of the same large gens with him, and pretending to a common divine or heroic descent."*

Second: The crown succeeding in its contest with the aristocracy, while the commons are not sufficiently powerful to make a declaration of independence, it by means of standing armies, and the right of taxation, establishes its supremacy. This was the case in France; the power that went from the feudal barons was all wrested by the crown. The commons rebelled from King John of France, but after short fits, almost of anarchy, the contest ended in the establishment of uncontrolled monarchical power. No more than one charter was obtained from the kings of France before the revolution. The States-General lost their opportunity during the wars with England of demanding to tax those whom

* Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, iii. 21. On the gradual resumption of power, see Niebuhr, *H. R.* i. 509.

they represented, and Charles VII. carried the point in favour of absolute monarchy, by the provision of a military force, and the allotment of a perpetual tax to support it.

When Machiavel wrote* he took France as his instance of a country of independent barons with their little circle of subjects, and contrasted it with the centralised functionarism of Turkey. But Richelieu and Mazarin did their utmost to reduce the baronial and increase the regal power, and Louis XIV. was able to say with truth, *l'état, c'est moi*. At this moment the government of France is more centralised than that of Turkey.†

Either of these courses may be followed while the crown and the aristocracy are the only two elements in the state having any real political power; and in fact no important social change is directly effected by these readjustments among the dominant order. The elevation of the commons and their demand of a share of power is the chief cause, as it is the sign of a transition to another social stage.

This transition is effected by various causes. The principal are the quarrels between the nobles, the contests between the king and the nobles, and the foundation of towns. The Athenian people obtained their first step towards political ascendancy by the necessities of the weaker faction among the nobles; for Kleisthenes being vanquished in a party contest became the advocate of popular rights.‡ So the quarrels of Robert and Henry caused many privileges to be granted to the conquered Saxons, and Philippe de Comines notes as a trait of national character the humanity with which the English nobles treated the people in the civil wars. In fact, the first feuds after a nation is founded by an

* Prince, ch. iv.

† There is a very remarkable passage in the nineteenth chapter of the "Prince" praising the growth of a parliamentary regime in France similar in the main respects to ours.

‡ Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, iii. 168.

aristocracy, are nearly always between the rival houses of the nobility, in which the common people as such take no part, but from which they eventually benefit *; and the first step towards giving the people political power, is their being invoked by one of the parties in these civil feuds.

Kings, again, in their contests with the nobles have often shown themselves the most ardent demagogues. Frederic Barbarossa, Ferdinand of Arragon, Louis XI., and Louis XIV. present signal instances of a policy common among monarchs of raising the populace, and more particularly if they are fortunate enough to possess one, of raising the bourgeois class of their subjects to a share of political power. Perhaps the first great stroke of policy taken by the Norman kings to win the favour of the Saxons in case of a contest with the nobles, was the marriage of Henry, in 1101, with a woman of Saxon race, the niece of Edgar. The ecclesiastical quarrels had also a salutary effect in a temporal point of view. Anselm and A'Beckett (the latter of Saxon origin), when they bearded the Norman kings proclaimed themselves advocates of the Saxon cause. The Tudor dynasty, always anxious to depress the baronial power, placed their great reliance on the affections of the middle classes, and sought the ratification of Parliament for even their most tyrannical acts. The Star Chamber was confirmed by statutes, and the proceedings of Empson and Dudley were sanctioned by Parliament.

Three measures especially, which we owe to the monarchical ambition of Henry VII., and the exhaustion of the nobles by the civil wars, may be mentioned as forming very marked steps in the diminution of aristocratic absolutism in England. The first, a series of enactments, one being passed nearly every session, limited the number of the noblemen's retainers, and thus converted a large host of their armed servants into agricultural labourers or town

* See Niebuhr, H. R. ii. 124.

traders ; the second* required the keeping up of farm-houses, and prevented inclosures, thus providing for the maintenance of a sturdy and comparatively independent agricultural population ; and the third† empowered the nobility to bar entails and alienate their estates, a proceeding which being resorted to by some of the indigent families, enabled commoners who had made money by trade to acquire landed property, and with it some share of the political power lost by the nobles. Thus, in the early history of England, as of other countries, the monarchical policy was to raise the commons and depress the nobles. In England, too, more than in other countries, the commons were appealed to by the nobles themselves. The power of the Norman kings was greater in England than the power of feudal monarchs in other countries ; and the nobles therefore, from the time of Magna Charta downwards, have frequently stood forward as the champions of freedom both for themselves and the commons against the aggressions of the sovereign. Whichever party therefore, whether nobles or king, wished to gain an advantage, found it necessary to enlist the sympathies of the commons.

The principal method by which the commons have advanced to a share of power has always been, in modern times, the foundation of towns. This has either taken place naturally with the increase of population and the influx of strangers, or is caused by the zeal of the monarch who, in order to raise up a body of men independent and hostile to the nobles, creates and gives charters to fortified towns. In England if villeins—that is serfs of a noble—came to any of the chartered towns, and enjoyed its immunities for a certain time, they became free, and looked to the king as their protector against the noble from whom they had run away, and all his fellows. Immigrants from foreign countries, instead of going to some noble and

* 4 H. 7, cap. 19.

† 4 II. 7, cap. 24.

engaging to become his serfs, went to a free town, and by their industry and artistic skill aided its prosperity. In every country of modern Europe the towns thus arose, and made the first starting-point for the power of the commons. In ancient times towns were originally the fortified camps of the conquering race : strangers who entered them entered as subjects ; but when an elective king was established in one of these town-nations, he, with the true monarchical instinct, took the foreigners and subjects under his protection, and so perhaps hoped to make his dynasty hereditary. This was the case in Rome. Numa established guilds of artisans ; Ancus and Servius taught the unattached plebs to look to the king of Rome as their patron and their successor. Tarquin always took the side of the Latin interest against the patrician houses. When the patricians resumed the power that the kings had previously wrested from them, fervently did the oppressed plebeians utter their secret prayers to the gods for a king and a protector.* But time repaired their wrongs ; for naturally the ascent of the commons is the more easy in a state like the Roman, which was not originally founded on an ancient conquest, but on a sort of compact between patricians and plebeians, than in a state like the Etruscan, where the plebeians began with serfdom, and in consequence of the development of the nation being arrested by external causes, never rose to freedom.†

The Spartan legislator, who wished to stop all progress, foresaw the consequence of allowing the immigration of strangers, who, establishing commerce and handicrafts, would form a democratic element dangerous to the supremacy of the Spartans over the Helots. Lycurgus, therefore, forbade the admission of strangers into Sparta.

After some portion of the commons had been by the above means collected into towns, or had otherwise ob-

* Macrobius, Saturn. i. 13.

† Niebuhr, H. R. i. 119.

tained a voice in the national councils, four other different combinations may arise. The first of these, the third of the six courses alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, is this :—The commons unite with the crown to overthrow the aristocracy. If the king manages to become a successful demagogue, and if it happens, as Claudian says, “mobile mutatur semper cum principe vulgus,” the result, of course, is a monarchical despotism, or as the Greeks would call it, a “tyranny.” This kind of government was established in Denmark after the revolution in 1660, both crown and commons opposing their real interests in destroying the aristocracy, for depression of the nobility may make a king more absolute but less safe.* After a *coup* of this nature, constitutional monarchy becomes for ever impossible.

In the fourth case, the nobles and commons combine to overthrow the regal power. To this achievement, Lucius Junius Brutus and his companions owe their fame. The traditional policy of the Romano-Sabine kings led Tarquin to favour the commons against the nobles ; but while he humbled the senate, he likewise invaded the legislative power of the commons, and attempted the erection of an unlimited monarchy. The true interest of both orders, therefore, coincided in his expulsion, although in effect the movement was chiefly conducted by and for the interests of the aristocracy. The result of a revolution of this kind is the co-existence of a patrician and plebeian class, who share between them the sovereignty of the state, though, in the instance of Rome, the patricians had at the time of Tarquin’s expulsion the greater power. There is no stability in a government formed by the compromise of two, when each party is ready at every favourable opportunity to break the compact, and there is no controlling power to enforce its observance. Many of the small Grecian states, the Romans

* Lord Bacon.

having what is called their republican period, and several of the states of mediæval Italy, present examples of this inharmonious mixture of the aristocratic and democratic elements. Greece (Sparta excepted), in the time of Solon was torn by the feuds of these two antagonistic parties. His friends wished Solon to assume a monarchy and hold the balance between these two powers, not as a *τυραννος*, who would have destroyed the oligarchy, but as a constitutional king. Solon declined, but established his constitution as a sort of quasi-monarchical check. In one of his poems*, after speaking of oligarchy and democracy, he says : —

Ἔστην δ' ἀμφιβαλὼν κρατερὸν σάκος ἀμφοτέροισι
Νικᾶν δ' οὐκ εἶας' οὐδετέρους ἀδίκως.

"I stood with a strong shield cast over both parties, so as not to allow an unjust triumph of either."

The consequence of increased strength in the patricians is to make them wrest from their opponents as much political influence as they can, and consolidate still more the power of the aristocracy. The consequence of a triumph by the plebeians is the establishment of equal laws, the abolition of all privileges, and the erection of a monarch. A sovereign, however, who is the creature of the plebeians has so many points of difference from a sovereign elected by the nobles, that there is scarcely any point of similarity left except the name. Even this is in some nations wanting, as, for example, in Greece, which furnishes many instances of demagogues turned kings, but they called them not *βασιλεὺς*, as they had termed the Homeric and the Spartan kings, but *τυραννοί*, whence our word tyrant, which, with some freedom, we apply to any monarch who consults nothing but his own interest and self-will. We have not, however, deviated so far from the Greek etymon, as may at first appear, for the essence of their view of a *βασιλεὺς*, was that he reigned, not absolutely, but upon terms†, in short, that his was a "limited monarchy," although the

* Fragm. ii. 3 : ed. Schneidewin.

† Ἐπὶ ρήτοισι γέρασι.

terms imposed upon him were imposed solely by the aristocracy, who retained the legislative power. A *τυραννος**, on the contrary, was a man, who rising to power by the popular voice, proceeded at once to assume both the executive and legislative functions, and to equalise all below the throne. Royalty, *βασίλεια*, was established to unite the aristocracy, and thus enable them better to protect themselves against the plebeians. They chose, by election, a head most suitable for the purpose, whereas the tyrant was chosen from the number of the people, and by them, in order to oppose the aristocracy. Kleisthenes of Sicyon, who rose from the Achæan subject tribe of that state, and lowered the aristocratic Dorians, is as notable an example of the Greek democratic tyrant as can well be selected. We have an excellent picture of the feelings of the vanquished patricians in the poems of the Megarean aristocrat, Theognis, whose order was subdued by a plebeian despot. In Italy, too, the people with no wish to renounce their liberty, desired, not a master, but a protector against the nobles; and endowing him, as Sismondi † says, with command of their forces, and the chief magistracy of the state, found to their cost that the *signor* became a sovereign. Another distinction worth noting between a feudal king and a monarch elevated by the commons is, that the

* If a *βασίλευς* managed to overthrow or subdue the aristocracy and found an absolute monarchy, as in the case of Denmark, he would become in effect a *τυραννος*. The characteristic of such a potentate being, that he ruled without checks from an aristocracy and with the favour of the populace. The tyrant of Grecian and mediæval Italy, was, however, in general a mere interlude in the contests of the patricians and plebeians, set up by the latter faction in their period of triumph, and deposed when fortune returned to the patricians.

† Sismondi, speaking of Philip della Torre, *signor* of the populace of Como, Vercelli, and Bergamo: "Dans ces villes, non plus que dans celles que son frère s'était auparavant assujetties, le peuple ne croyait point renoncer à sa liberté, il n'avait point voulu choisir un maître, mais seulement un protecteur contre les nobles, un capitaine des gens de guerre, et un chef de la justice. L'expérience lui apprit trop tard, que ces prérogatives réunies constituaient un souverain."—*Repub. Ital.* iii. 273.

former is king of the soil, the latter king of the people. Sometimes, indeed, a patriciate body for the purpose of checking the plebeian order, creates a quasi-regal office, but, unlike the plebeians, it always knows how to check such a potentate. The dictatorship of Rome, when first established, was merely a means for the evasion of the Valerian laws, and was in fact only a revival of the ancient custom of electing a king by the votes of the patricians.

Fifthly, the commons raised into power may overthrow the crown and the aristocracy. While the nobles of France had all become courtiers, and villenage was maintained on their estates, the towns were allowed to grow in importance, and the class which they brought into prominence, the Tiers Etat, finding themselves by their wealth and energy a power in the state, but not recognised as a power in the constitution, rose against the aristocratic families, then impoverished by the number of their members. If the aristocracy had not, as a political constitution, been totally destroyed, it would have been recalled to power on the reaction produced by the extremes of popular fury, and the disappointment felt by those who in seeking liberty had only erected a tyrant. The downfall of a Grecian or Italian tyrant was followed by the resumption of supreme power by the aristocracy, so long as that body retained sufficient strength in the state to take advantage of the opportunity; but when successive blows, and the natural progress of society, which always weakens the patricians and strengthens the commons, had at the last outbreak of popular frenzy rendered the former too feeble to overthrow the plebeian monarch, the despotic government is firmly established, however unsure may be the power of the despot himself. Julius Cæsar, backed by the commons, was too strong for the enfeebled patricians, and his death gave no more opening to the patricians, but only afforded occasion for a new *τυραννος*, or as he was then called, emperor.

It is manifest from these considerations that the nation is kept back by the increase of aristocratic power ; its changes retarded, and consequently its existence prolonged. The plebeians are the party of progress, and the fewer the checks upon them the greater is the rapidity with which the nation passes through the ordinary phases which lead to the subsequent and final establishment of the *τυραννος* or despot.

In the sixth and last combination, the power of the crown and the commons continue increasing, the aristocracy divides between the two. This was the case in England. The contest then takes the shape of prerogative and privilege, as from the time of Edward I. to the time of Charles I. and of James II. That the contest which ended in the execution of Charles was not the means of introducing a despotism either in the return of the royal family with unlimited power, or the continuance of an usurpation, seems to have been owing to the part which the aristocracy took. Many of the nobles, partisans of the popular side, remained in the country, and the order did not lose its respect among the people, as was the case in France at the revolution of 1789, when the nobles sided almost entirely with the court. The Parliament-men were so far from being anxious to abolish nobility, as was done in France, that the House of Commons, in December 1645, voted dukedoms, earldoms and marquisesates to the most prominent Roundheads. Cromwell would have resembled a Greek *τυραννος*, if he, being as he was, the creature of the commons, had likewise been the avowed opponent of the aristocracy. That, however, he was not. He rose by leading the opposition against royalty. The aristocracy was divided between the Parliament* and the king. Again, in our second revolution of 1688, the

* The Parliamentary army was headed by the Earls of Stamford, Essex, Manchester, Warwick, Northumberland, and Bedford.

greater part of the nobles and the Protestant clergy took the part of freedom, and called to a limited monarchy the man who was holding the chief place in a republic. In England nobility has never been a caste.

These are the various combinations which the original elements of national society have formed, and each different combination has produced a different result.

CHAP. VII.

THE CONDITION OF NATIONS AS THEY APPROACH
THE ACME.

“Sauver la noblesse de l'infortune, et le peuple de la misère, en étendant le commerce, c'est éloigner l'esclavage; c'est élever des remparts contre le despotisme.” — L'ABBÉ COTER.

It will have perhaps struck the reader of the last two chapters, that where six or more roads diverge from one point, the nations which select directions so different are likely to display a corresponding variation in the incidents of their journey. That was the view which I intended to present to the reader's mind, and without distorting any facts I have stated them in a manner most calculated to support it, anxious to let it here once for all come forward to refute me in the plenitude of its plausibility, rather than allow it to remain in ambush to be brought out upon me in some of the narrow fastnesses through which we may perhaps have to adventure our way.

The diversities undoubtedly exist, and to trace them will be part of our future task, but what I am anxious here distinctly to state is, that they are not as it were independent routes, starting in opposite directions, but that they are all cases of arrested development, all instances of the different manner in which the same track is traversed. As it is but in one or two individuals in a thousand that any approximation to the beau-ideal of manhood can be found, but as one approaches most nearly physical perfection, another intellectual, another moral, so nations have approached excellence in greater or less degrees and

in different departments, yet no one has yet reached any but a remote approximation to general excellence. Although many nations have been its superior each in some one particular England has succeeded in attaining higher towards excellence in a greater number of circumstances than any other nation with which we are acquainted, and its historical career has therefore been generally accepted as on the whole approximating most nearly to the normal. Perfect development in any of the works of creation remains as yet a pure idea, but as in the course of development there are an infinitude of points in which each example may either succeed or fail, the variety of the examples cannot be limited within known bounds. This variety arises from every cause that can stunt or unduly develop a particular element of national life. No cause is more powerful than the follies and vices of mankind, ever fertile in producing new effects. Retrogression, progress in false directions, and an undue delay of progress are consequences of the perversity and blindness of those who ought to be the agents and promoters of a proper national progress. But their errors, however disastrous at the time, are not of lasting consequence, for

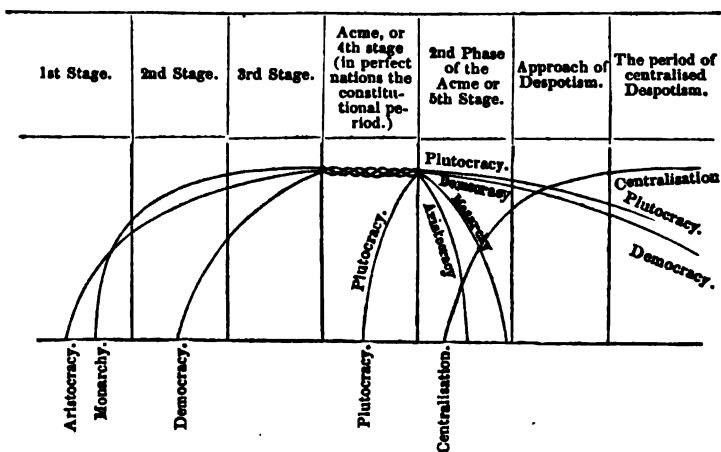
“ Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them how we will.”

To trace the laws laid down by that divinity, and to show their operation when unimpeded, and the effects produced by their operation when combined with impediments is the object to which the attention of statesmen and political writers ought to be directed.

To repeat, then, the first stage of national society, the starting-point in their career of development, is when a few conquerors settle in the land of a subjugated people, and the tendency of all future development is to transfer

the power of the nobles, either in whole or part, to a central monarchical government, a democratic constitution, or a combination of these with aristocracy. Forms of government, I have said, depend upon the social adjustments of the population. Will those who controvert this be good enough to say what other form of government, except one in which the sovereign power is in the hands of a few men, would be possible for a political body where there is distinctly drawn an impassable line of demarcation between the small tribe of sovereigns and the large mass of subjects? Any other form of government would in fact be an abrogation of their supremacy by the conquerors, and would transfer the nation at once into some one of the social stages which naturally supervene on the decadence of aristocratic power. It would sound like a truism to say that an aristocratic form of government is necessary for an aristocracy, had not that position been covertly denied by those who insinuate the general principle that forms of government are independent of the social adjustments to which they are annexed.

The full development, and the natural adjustment of the elements of national progress appear to be such as are indicated by the following scheme :—



The variations from this scheme, in recounting which philosophical history is principally occupied, are simply caused by the greater strength or weakness at particular moments of the social elements, indicated by lines. It is necessary to remember that the distribution into the above six stages is perfectly arbitrary, that the duration of any nation in any stage is sometimes a period of centuries, at others only a few years; that one or more of these elements may be wholly wanting, and that a nation may pass from the first, or any other stage, to the last without ever having passed through all or any of the intermediate stages.

The first steps in this progress are the deposition of the aristocratic power from its position of sole sovereignty, and the foundation of royalty as a separate element, and the elevation of the subject populace, which we may call the democracy, into a political existence, however feeble. Now let us contemplate some of the variations which might then take place. Is monarchy, failing to establish itself, ultimately cast out? That was the case in Rome, and consequently when we arrive at the acme of Roman history, to that which would have been in the natural course of development its constitutional stage, we find that one of the elements, the balancing element, is totally wanting, and that a constitutional government is therefore but imperfectly developed. There are but the aristocracy and the democracy, with the rising plutocracy.

Is aristocracy annihilated? Here we have the case of Denmark since 1660, where an undeveloped democracy aiding the monarch to overthrow the aristocracy, ended only in establishing an absolute sovereignty. Denmark never has had a constitutional period, nor is it ever capable of having one, for when the democracy may be sufficiently powerful to take a third share in the constitution, there will be wanting an aristocracy, which can never be artificially supplied. It may have an acme, but it will

never be a complete one ; for the aristocratic element will be omitted.

Is democracy controlled and excluded from all power ? That can never be socially, though it may be for a time politically. When such a political subjection takes place, the third stage is indeed only a prolongation of the second stage ; and at the national acme there is a social adjustment like that of France before the revolution. A strong monarchy and aristocracy, with all political power in their hands, a rising plutocracy of great wealth, and an intelligent democracy, without any share in the government,—such an arrangement produces a brilliant national development, the force and merit of each party in the state is prominently brought forward. But if the several elements do not participate in the government, such a régime presents an example of a constitutional period without a constitution. It is scarce necessary to add that the government in France before the revolution of 1788 was not adapted to the state of society, and the violation of the principle that every government ought to be so adapted, brought about the disasters which one must regard as the natural consequence of any such political blunder.

Let the democracy destroy the monarchy and aristocracy, and we pass at once to the national acme, but one in which the governmental arrangements proper to that period are only partially developed. There is nothing to stem or check the democracy but the plutocracy. Let the monarchy and the aristocracy combine to keep down the democracy, and so long as they succeed we remain in the second or third stage ; so soon as they fail we advance, whatever be the form of government, into the acme. To destroy forever the latent energy of the people is not in the power of any combination. It can be destroyed only by the corruption of the national character, and that cannot be accomplished even by the example of a court or an aristocracy.

Here let us make a distinction which will simplify the rest of our enquiry :—

It is the national character, and not the form of government, which is the real index of a nation's stage ; because, though according to the laws of political propriety the latter ought to vary with the former, and in all cases ultimately does so ; still, as in pre-revolutionary France, that propriety may be for a time violated, though its violation produces both calamity to the nation and confusion to the philosophical historian. To appreciate rightly the stage of development in which a nation is, it is necessary to observe rightly the national character.

What are, then, the marked features of the national character in its earlier stages ? The conquerors are military ; arms in such a society are not a profession, but the prerogative of the dominant race. To preserve a nation in its first stage, it is necessary to adopt the Spartan rule, and keep one class to the military training, while the others are forbidden to handle weapons, for the natural tendencies of human nature lead men, when once they have acquired principalities and seigniories, to devote themselves to the immediate enjoyment, rather than to the permanent security, of their possessions.

The art of war was the employment alike of the Normans who subjugated England, of the Lucomones of Etruria, of the Teutonic races who possessed themselves of the Lombard towns, of the Doric aristocracy throughout Greece, and, indeed, of every primitive aristocracy ; for it is an obvious result from the necessary character of military invaders, that the pursuit of arms should be the ruling and peculiar pursuit of the original aristocracy, and it has generally continued to be that of a large portion of their descendants as long as the aristocracy remains the supreme body in the state.

What is the pursuit of the subjects ? With respect to that I would lay down this principle :—*It is the occupation of the subject population which principally marks the*

national character, and therefore the stage of development in which a nation is at any given moment.

The first pursuit of the tribe which settles itself otherwise than as an aristocracy in a fixed habitation, is of course agriculture. The tribesmen are compelled, by their increased number, to substitute for or add to their employments as hunters and shepherds, the cultivation of the ground. In this transitional period two rules are very commonly observed ; first, to seize upon the most fertile land, which thenceforth becomes the scene of future immigrations the more numerous in proportion to its fertility; and secondly, when this and the less fertile land have become insufficient to support the increasing population by agriculture, the subject race is driven for sustenance to commerce, navigation, and manufactures. Such occupations lead to the formation of towns, and this, as we have noted, shares with commerce the honour of being the most prominent and necessary means in national development. Nations, therefore, which have been planted on a barren soil have often, by becoming sooner commercial, passed through their phases of progress with greater rapidity than those planted on a more fruitful soil. The reason of this is manifest. The more food the ground yields with a certain degree of cultivation the larger will be the population supported, and the longer, therefore, will the population be in increasing from its originally small number to the highest possible number which can be supported on that system ; the longer, therefore, is the nation detained from that stage of its development when it becomes necessary for the surplus population to seek a life by trade or manufactures.

Nearly all countries or states which have enjoyed a commercial reputation have been either small islands, or have possessed a very confined territory—for example, Carthage, Tyre, Sidon, Rhodes, Sicily, Smyrna, Genoa, Venice, Holland — and the very barrenness and inutility of their land for the purpose of sufficient subsistence, while it has

been their great incentive to trade, has likewise proved their best protector against hostile invasions. Not merely Attica, but almost all states that have risen with rapidity to commercial grandeur have owed no small part of their success to the absence of military spoilers, and, at the same time, immigration of industrious strangers, which gave to that province of Greece its early pre-eminence.*

But as I purpose first to sketch this development by means of its fullest examples, let us return to the case of a country of average fertility, whose population, purely agricultural, has been invaded by a warlike tribe. The first political step after such a crisis, when the invaders are not bound together by laws in a camp-town, like the Spartans, is the settlement by each conqueror of his seigniory, and the more complete subjection of any disobedient vassals. Isolated principalities are thus formed, there being but little to connect the conquerors except a community of origin and interest, an equality of rank, and occasional necessity for mutual support. The gradual recognition of these ties and the need for common council gives the first start to a national unity and a political constitution. The idea of a state arises, and the individual power of the nobles is absorbed into the power of their assembly.

This national union generally turns out for the immediate advantage of the central power,—a result which, with its causes, may be well studied in the example of Poland before the year 1025. Hence monarchy has so often established itself at the moment when the necessity of combination tends to consolidate the power of the person whose office makes him the impersonation of central unity. Again, therefore, there is an impulse towards the establishment of a constitution. Not only do the nobles bind themselves to mutual duties and good offices, but it becomes necessary also to lay down restrictions on the central monarch, who reigns therefore, like the Homeric kings,

* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 2.

on fixed terms, and the monarchy is "limited," although the limit is imposed by the aristocracy only.

The struggles to break or to contract these limits, the resort to force and the enlistment of the subject populace on one side or the other, create those political adjustments which I have sketched in the preceding chapter. In order to illustrate some of our previous positions—which it is no part of this design to consider established, but rather to keep open for support or refutation throughout the survey—let us put the case of a monarch firmly enthroned, an aristocracy with strong personal but very little political power, and a democracy still agricultural; in short, let us open the page of history where Frederick II. of Prussia reigns. Why was not the kingdom of this monarch a country in its constitutional stage? simply because the commons were almost wholly without commerce, because large towns were unknown, and there was no previous adaptation for seizing that point d'appui which the king gave the people, who would then have had it in their power to have attained a share in the government, and made Prussia a constitutional monarchy like England. But Prussia was in its second stage (according to the gradation sketched above) and not in its third, still less its fourth stage. Now the whole effort of Frederick was to consolidate the royal power as against the nobles, to elevate the democracy, and to call a plutocracy into existence. With this view he not merely moderated as far as he dared the serfdom of the peasants, but spent his treasure in building towns, and encouraged by strong measures the immigration of industrious foreigners. His passion for making commercial companies* was only equalled by the signal failure of this attempt to create a class of capitalists. For to call a

* There were "compagnie de l'Elbe, compagnie de l'Oder, compagnie du Levant, compagnie des Indes, compagnie des harengs, compagnie du sel, compagnie d'assurances, compagnie maritime," &c. — *Mirabeau, Monarch. Pruss.* i. 129.

plutocracy into existence is more than the single will of a monarch can accomplish.

In Prussia, then, as it was in the days of Frederick the Great, we have a striking corroboration of our position, that on the condition and occupations of the democratic element depends the stage of national development. Here the monarchic and aristocratic elements were so constituted as to be ready to take their share in a constitutional government, had the third element not been deficient.

The consequence of this defect was that the monarchy absorbed the power of the aristocracy, and now that the popular voice is expressed, though still feebly, yet with a power wanting in the days of Frederick, there is no independent aristocracy, but only a centralised functionarism, which siding always with, and being parcel of the court, leaves the broad distinction of governors and governed, which renders for ever impossible a true constitutional monarchy, and presents one of the leading features of the last stage of national development.

It is curious and most important in the history of nations to trace the struggle between the centralising and the local powers, during the ages when a nation wears the colours of a feudal monarch. The outward form may, so long as the feudal monarchy remains, be substantially unaltered, whatever be the struggle going on beneath the surface, but when the feudal monarchy comes to an end, then the results of the struggle become apparent. As the caterpillar goes on feeding and thriving equally well though the embryo butterfly within it be preyed upon by the larvæ of the ichneumon-fly; and it is only when the caterpillar dies that the result is seen, either in the development of the live butterfly, or in the total extinction both of caterpillar and butterfly — so when the feudal monarchy comes to an end, if under its shade local independence has gained the struggle, constitutional monarchy comes forth to take the place of the

feudal monarchy. But if centralisation has been established, there can be no constitutional monarchy; but there is instead that last stage of national life, the tomb of progress—a centralised despotism.

Now the feudal monarchy of France ceased with the revolution that dethroned Louis XVI.; the feudal monarchy of England may be considered to have ceased with the revolution that dethroned Charles I. We know the different results of these revolutions: the one nation, after trying many governments, has subsided into a centralised despotism as the only appropriate government; the other has established a constitutional monarchy. Now France, in the Carlovingian and Merovingian times, was a collection of feudal baronies, with a central head of no independent power. Throughout the history of that country before the revolution, we trace the continued decay of feudal baronies, and local powers. They were made and became unfit for governing in their several spheres. The nobility went to Paris and became courtiers, the little local potentates who remained became corrupt. All men therefore looked for legislation and sensible rule to the business-like and comparatively honest intendants of the central government. Thus the embryo of constitutional monarchy was destroyed, while the feudal monarchy remained.

In England too, centralisation attempted to force its way; but it never succeeded, for the nation was highly jealous of central functionaries, and the local powers retained sufficient probity to provide for the administration of the minor local affairs without resort to the government of the king. A ray of light is thrown upon this subterranean struggle by such entries in our Statute-Book as this: "A.D. 1641.—An act that no clerk of the market of his Majesty's house should execute his office in any part of the kingdom, but only within the verge of the court; and the execution of that office granted to mayors and bailiffs of towns corporate; and to the lords of liberties

and franchises, and to their deputies," an act which Lord Clarendon* seems little to have approved. The consequence of the maintenance of these "lesser franchises and royalties, which especially keep up the power, distinction, and degrees of men†," was that when the phase of feudal monarchy ceased, the nation was prepared to emerge into that of constitutional monarchy.

* Hist of the Rebellion, i. 501.

† Ibid. 502.

CHAP. VII.

THE PRIMACY OF THE WORLD.

"What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own?"—COWLEY.

WHAT recluse so blinded with theories of rectilinear progress, what statesman so shy of evil augury, what historian so tender of hinting the decay of his subject, what enthusiast is there so enslaved to hope as to deny when closing the annals of any nation of place and of renown, that there is one bright summer in its history, a time of energy, of stateliness, of splendour, when its character was most fully formed and its progress was the progress of humanity? When the hour of its greatness strikes, a nation hitherto little known and regarded with no awe or veneration comes suddenly to the front rank, bearing with it all such elements of success as its previous career has furnished to it, and straining them to the utmost, it impresses its character on the century, it furnishes from among its sons all the men who in that age advance knowledge; so that the history of that nation's progress, so long as it holds the foremost place, is the history of the progress of humanity.

Posterity, as it contemplates the story of nations, once great, but great no longer, is apt to contract its field of view, and in its eagerness to study the epoch of their glory forgets the raw years of their youth, the feeble

struggles of their age. The rays of their varied splendour contract as we retreat into one burning focus, more dazzling and more sublime than when we look upon them closer. Greece and Rome, Carthage and Egypt, Venice and Florence, Spain and Holland, had their brilliant periods of proud supremacy with a dark past and a darker future. Men leave to students and to statesmen those wastes and deserts of uncultured history, and love to read of the times when a people, flushed with power and prestige, struggles for this eminence; when proud in the possession of a polished literature that makes foreigners learn their language for what may be read in it, able to show the native works of no mean artists, strong in the valour of soldiers chosen from the homes of a bold and numerous peasantry, renowned in distant countries for argosies laden sometimes with armed crowds, sometimes with the wealth of upright merchants, honoured as the country of savans who have achieved greater triumphs in intellectual discovery than their compeers of other lands,—when, on such relying, a nation justly combats, by force of speech and force of arms, for the primacy of the world, and having obtained it, advances, with the rest of the world behind it, to new and useful discoveries, and opens up fresh and unheard of forms of knowledge and of power. The acme of a nation is that period of its existence when its own progress is the progress of the human spirit.

In ages earlier than that which I designate by the term of acme, a grand and terrible name may sometimes be achieved; but it is achieved in one way only, by force of arms. Macedon, a nation of rude soldiers, made its name resound in the curses of every Grecian patriot. Sweden, a country of honest agriculturists, by the valour of its troops, and his own genius, placed its king at the head of Protestant Europe. Russia can make its power feared throughout the civilised world by the multitude of its soldier-serfs and the unquiet ambition of its Czars; but

the Greek was the master of the Macedonian's mind, the Russian noble derives all his ideas, his refinements, his tastes, from the natives of the West. The Turks were at one time the most formidable people in Europe, yet nobody will hold that European Turkey has ever had any other relations with Christian nations than those of the strong man with the weak one.

Of such supremacy, generally short-lived, always dependent only on the sword or the bribe, it is not my object to speak here. I rather wish to say how to splendour in all that elevates and dignifies humanity, to fame for honourable and for noble conduct, to military glory, to a restless enterprise that endows mean citizens with princely wealth, to rapid advance in those positive sciences which are the common property of all mankind, there is added in nations that possess at once all, or most of these qualities, the pride of state—that invincible prestige by which one nation leads the mind and guides the tastes of its neighbours, while it advances the permanent interests of humanity.

I know few things more striking as an apparent mark of design in the progress of human affairs, than the succession of nations. We are wont to learn history at school by the dates of the coronation of our kings. We might as justly draw up a skeleton history of the world by the dates of the enthronisation of nations. Open the page wherever one will, and some one people occupies the foremost rank and dictates not always so much to the persons, as to the minds of those around them, a sway as keenly felt, though less openly acknowledged. And thus, if we could see only the foremost tableaux of civilisation, nearly all the nations of the world would pass before us in review, each when it holds the torch of humanity, and when the progress of that nation is the progress of our mind.

“ Westward the march of empire takes its course.”

In the mystical valley of the Nile, there lived in the

eighth and seventh centuries before Christ, a busy, industrious, inventive people who had devised many arts, and had collected from the far East all that the eastern nations knew. Architecture, sculpture, the use of paper, the practice of writing, mathematics, chemistry, pharmacy, indeed almost all the principal arts which now exist, arose in Egypt or came to Europe through Egypt, and that at a time when the Egyptian name was terrible, and splendid, and captive myriads followed the chariot of Pharaoh. But we know little of that early age, and can never know more. The progress of our species marches darkly amid the awful stillness, and the deep shadow of those old colossal temples from the secret shrines of the Egyptian priests, half buried beneath the sands of time, and it is useless to attempt to track it. The first burst of intelligible and well recorded civilisation was in

“ The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece !
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung, *Sang,*
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung.” *Spring.*

In the sixth century before Christ the foremost people of the world were the Ionic and Italic Greeks. While Athens was still a collection of tents and hovels, and Corinth yet a rude village, the magnificent citizens of Miletus, Lesbos, Samos, Locri, Croton, Sybaris, and Rhegium ruled over many thousands of subject tribesmen, and acquired enormous wealth by conducting, with but small rivalry from the Phœnicians, the trade of Europe and Asia Minor. Their cities then contained all the leaders of human thought, men that have made great and cardinal discoveries, which once published, have become the property of all mankind for all ages. Think sometimes when the vast scheme of our universe is unfolded to you, and you feel the deepest emotions of awe at the magnificence of the design, and of thankfulness at being permitted to understand it ; think then sometimes with reverence and

gratitude of the old Ionians, Thales and Anaximander, who taught first and taught once for all to mankind, that our earth was round, our moon shone with a borrowed light, and the sun was a flaming mass at least as large as the earth. When in midday the sun suddenly withdraws his light, and an unnatural darkness frightens the brute creation, worship the memory of that same Thales, who first placed man in this respect above the level of the brutes, taught him why this sudden darkness comes, and telling him it would soon pass away, forbade him to think the end of the world arrived; nay more, who foretold when the darkness would come, and to whom the eclipse which made the Medes and the Lydians in battle assembled to lay down their arms, caused not as to them fear, but the pride of a prophecy fulfilled.* The sun-dial on your lawn should be the monument of Anaximander, who first—at least of Europeans—made the sun tell the hours, while his fellow-citizen, Aristagoras going to Sparta to ask aid for Ionia against Darius, took with him a chart of the lands he implored them to save—the first map that man had made.

It would be too long for this place, to recount in detail how the Ionian Greeks, in the sixth century B.C., first taught the equality of angles at the base of an isosceles triangle and the obliquity of the ellipse, first constructed a sphere and invented the arts of welding iron and casting copper or brass in a mould, how they were the first writers on geography, and added a fresh octave to the lyre; but so long as the memory remains of these bright Ionian days, and what was thought and spoken by the great minds that those rich and refined cities nurtured, no need will there ever be to rediscover these arts, to prove again these—the elements of science.

The same age and the same country which produced the discoveries of Thales and Anaximander, produced also

* Delambre (*Hist. Astronom. Disc. Prelim.*, p. ix.) and some other astronomers discredit this prophecy of Thales.

the poetry of Archilochus, Anacreon, Sappho, and Alcæus, and the moralising verses of Simonides, while Miletus became celebrated throughout the world for the splendour of its fabrics, the richness of its woollen products, and Samos acquired a glorious reputation for the enterprise of its sailor-merchants, and the new seas they opened up to the Grecian world. In short Ionian Greece was then in its acme.

But unhappily, the independent career of the Ionian Greeks was as short as it was magnificent. Soft, luxurious, and refined, they finally became, about 490 B.C., the slaves of the Persian barbarians. The spirit of human progress dwells never among slaves when there are freemen to receive it, and passed in the persons of Pythagoras and Xenophanes from their native Ionia to the Greek cities on the shores of Italy.

About that time Croton and Sybaris were in their acme. We know less of them and of the other kindred and neighbouring cities which then flourished, than we do of the Ionians; but the Pythagorean school, mysterious as it is, established for mankind that the earth moves round the sun, and first dared to say that the stars which are spread through the immensity of space are suns—the centres of systems—like that of which our globe forms but a part. The Pythagoreans studied deeply both arithmetic and music, they discovered the incommensurability of certain lines, a fact lying at the foundation of mathematical inquiry. Pythagoras, by a beautiful discovery, was the founder of the philosophy of sound, and his school at Croton was distinguished for its medical science.

The Ionian Greeks and the cluster of Greek cities in Italy, of which Croton and Sybaris were the chief, flourished almost about the same time, and were so intimately connected with one another by commerce and constant intercourse, and above all that sympathy which ever binds together two races more refined and civilised than the rest of the world, that they may be treated as

one national development, the first of which we have sufficient materials to trace, however imperfectly, its progress. Their earlier and their later history is indeed buried in great obscurity, and their acme which may be said in round numbers to extend from 650 to 500 B.C. is the only period of their history on which the light still shines. That acme shows an imperfect national development. The elements of aristocracy and monarchy are wanting; the elements which are present are democracy and plutocracy. We see the energy and inventive spirit and physical science of the one, the magnificence, the refinement, the voluptuousness of the other. If it were possible to discover the details of their civilisation, we should find that they had for a time free constitutions, and a class of rich statesmen, who were educated in all the knowledge and refinements then existing. Their literature was confined to the literature of plutocracies — light, sensuous, lyric poetry, and as the ancients tell us, they perished of luxury.

But all of theirs perished not with them. The contribution of a nation to the cause of positive science is its monument in the temple of immortality. All that was contributed to the advancement of humanity in the sixth century before Christ, was contributed by the Ionic and Italic Greeks. Let us not complain that they did not advance humanity further, nor scoff at their poor and scanty stock of knowledge. It was all that they were born to know.

Their grandeur passes, their history closes; the spirit of human development is taken up at the point where they left it, and becomes for a while identified with a new national progress—that of the Sicilian Greeks. Their cities, of which Syracuse and Agrigentum were the most powerful and famous, had been founded by the fusion of warlike emigrants from continental Greece with the native Sikels. Whether a genuine aristocracy was ever established may reasonably be doubted, but whatever approach to one existed was destroyed or converted into a plutocracy by

the tyrants* (in the Greek sense of the term) who rose in the Sicilian cities from about B.C. 500 to 465 ; and on their expulsion, about the latter date, left democracy and plutocracy the only social elements in Grecian Sicily.

A most splendid period followed, and, till Athens achieved its greatness (about 439 B.C.), the Sicilian Greeks, and those of the Italian towns which partook of their movements and civilisation, were second to no nation then existing. The enterprise and energy of the citizens was rewarded by the acquisition of enormous wealth, which was spent with ostentatious magnificence in public temples and halls, whose colossal remains still exist ; in private palaces of a sumptuousness previously unknown in Europe, and crowded with the choicest works of painting and sculpture†, while their banquets resounded with the discussions of philosophers and the sweetest strains of lyric song ; and they indulged in a voluptuousness, both material and intellectual‡, which led Empedocles, himself of Agrigentum, to say that they built their houses as if they were to live for ever, but gave themselves up to luxury as if they were to die on the morrow.

But had the Sicilian Greeks done no more than build for themselves the most magnificent cities, and call forth the works of the chisel and the brush which first showed to mankind the exquisite taste of the Grecian artist, they would pass before us as a brilliant and eccentric meteor, not one of the chain of runners that has borne along the torch of humanity. But we owe to Sicily and Sicilian

* See Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, v. 276.

† Diodorus, xiii. 82, 83, 90. Grote, vii. 173.

‡ The Sicilians of this period were especially celebrated for the ostentatious magnificence of their chariots and horses in the chariot race at the Olympic Games, and for the splendour of their hospitalities. We read, in later days, of Gellias, a citizen of Agrigentum, who lodged and feasted at once 500 knights from Gela ; and Antisthenes gave a feast to all the citizens of Agrigentum. (Diod. xiii. 83, 84.) See Grote, vii. 173.

Italy the first foundations of what I may call the science of intellectual liberty. No nation of which we have any record has ever reached its acme without possessing a considerable share of intellectual liberty. It is evident, for instance, that in order to produce a school of minds like those of Thales, Anaximander, and Anaxagoras, the Ionian Greeks must have practised the arts of intellectual liberty, but they have not left us the science of it. They produced a school of calm reasoners who could dare to say to the multitude that Helios was not a god but a globe of fire, and that eclipses came not as portents at the caprice of a deity, but as the consequence of fixed laws with which no pagan deity could interfere, and whose operation man could read and foretell. But these philosophers had not reduced to a science, for the use of future nations, the means of achieving this result, of making philosophy take the place of religion in the solution of those deep problems which reason can explain when faith will let it do so. But to the Greeks of Sicily and Sicilian Italy we owe the foundation of ethics, logic, and rhetoric, the instruments by which every succeeding nation has shaken off, and will to the end of time, when the moment of its greatness comes, shake off, the husk of ancient belief in which it has grown up, and, inquiring into the rudiments of existence, contract the dominion of faith to the regions where reason cannot dwell.

There is hardly any moment in national existence more striking and more fascinating than that which is marked by the first burst of mental liberty, especially in a nation where democracy and plutocracy are the only social elements ; because, as its development is more brief and condensed than those of other nations, so the splendour of it is more concentrated and impressive. By dint of great energy and industry, rude and uneducated citizens have attained sudden and great wealth. They expend it not only in sumptuous edifices, and in providing all the bodily luxuries and refinements of life, but in summoning

to their halls, from all parts of the world, the wisest and most learned men, and in providing for their sons, destined to be statesmen, the most refined education which money can secure.

In those magnificent Sicilian republics, the thirst for knowledge and every intellectual accomplishment arose in the first half of the fifth century before Christ; and the sons of the opulent merchants, qualifying themselves to be graceful and accomplished statesmen, attended the lectures of Parmenides and Zeno, who taught them how to think; of Empedocles, Tisias, and Gorgias, who taught them how to express their thoughts. In short, their schools of philosophers founded the science of dialectics, and the science of the human mind, which is called metaphysics; while their rhetoricians founded the science of rhetoric; and Empedocles and his compeers inquired still further than the Ionian and Italic Greeks had done into the nature of the universe. It will be observed that the next national progress takes up dialectics and metaphysics where Zeno left them; rhetoric (so far as it is a progressive science) from the precepts of Tisias and Gorgias; and physical inquirers from the point to which Empedocles, Heraclitus, Leucippus, and Democritus had brought them.

During the time while first Miletus, Colophon, Samos, and the kindred circles of Ionian cities, then Croton, Sybaris, and the rest of the contemporary Italian cities, and lastly Sicily and Sicilian Italy, successively advanced human progress, each, as we have seen, at the time of its greatest material grandeur, Athens stood by and took no part in the race. Indeed, if a philosopher like Anaxagoras of Ionia came to Athens from the progressive nations, the Athenians accused him of impiety, and obliged him to betake himself elsewhere. The Athenian was the latest of the Grecian developments, and it was the most perfect.

Up to the year 430 B.C. the Athenian civilisation had been confined to the development of the aristocratic

element, and the production of all those magnificent results which are due to a refined aristocracy. Accordingly we find, before that period, legislators laying down absolute rules of political duty and private conduct, which were implicitly obeyed; priests, connected with the aristocracy, fortifying those rules by the terrors which priests alone can wield, and, in common with the poets, laying down settled subjects of belief on all those topics, both human and divine, about which every age, however uninquiring, needs to have a code of opinion and belief. Under the shadow of this canopy, and as the direct result of the refinement of the aristocracy, came those glorious tragedians who alone would have established an undying fame for Athens.

Æschylus died in the year 456 B.C., Sophocles and Euripides were still alive in the year B.C. 430, when the torch of human knowledge left the cities of Sicily and Italy, then corrupt and fit no longer to be its abode, and came to Athens. Pericles was the ruling statesman, the *beau-idéal* of a refined aristocrat at the moment when aristocracy is about to descend from its eminence and admit the democracy to an equal participation of power. Now, of what did this stock of human knowledge consist, and who brought it to Athens?

It consisted of the discoveries of Thales and the Ionian school respecting the truths of astronomy, of the speculations of Parmenides and Empedocles respecting the nature of the universe; discoveries and speculations that necessarily gave a great blow to the belief in the mythology which then was enshrined in the most holy place in every Athenian mind: for they told the unwilling Athenians that their beautiful legends about the gods in general, and Helios and Artemis, the sun and moon, in particular, were mere romances; the gods did not exist, their worship was folly, and the tales respecting them were impossible falsehoods.

It consisted further of the discoveries of the Pytha-

goreans in medicine, it taught the Athenians how useless it was to pray to their gods for health ; health came not the more for prayers, but it came by the application of the remedies which the craft of man had discovered.

This knowledge consisted further of the metaphysical speculations of Parmenides, and the logical art of Zeno the Eleatic ; an art that enabled those who had learned it to refute the broad propositions laid down by believing men ; an art that permitted no statement to pass unexamined, and, when it could not openly refute it, entangled its supporters in a mesh of subtle reasoning the more irritating because the victim felt, though he could not expose, its falsehood.

Lastly, this knowledge consisted of the art of rhetoric reduced to a science, enabling those who had learned it to prove, if it suited them, the worse to be the better cause, and subverting the old aristocratic notion of public speaking, which held it to be but the short delivery of his honest opinion by a man whose lofty character and high feelings entitled him to speak with authority, and whom no bribe could have induced to speak against his views ; while in the hands of the rhetorician, who would speak on whichever side bribed him highest, public speaking became the means of making the audience believe to be true what the speaker knew to be false.

Who brought all this knowledge to Athens ? The teachers of the then corrupt Sicilian and Italian plutocracies, men who, after exposing the falsehood of the very rudiments of Athenian faith and uprooting the anchors of the mind, substituted no code in its place, opened no harbour of refuge for the troubled spirit, but left it to float about rudderless in a sea of doubt, believing nothing, hoping nothing, and arguing on any side that self-interest might lead it to for the moment. They came to teach young Athens all the intellectual accomplishments then known, and filled the minds of their pupils with the conceit of universal knowledge.

These were the Sophists, a class of which we first read in the history of Athens in the fifth century before Christ, but under other names, with more or less welcome from the party of progress, with more or less disfavour from the party of conservation, and, vending other intellectual wares and bearing other badges of opprobrium, the sophists have reappeared, and will reappear, in every national development at the first moment of its acme, provided there has existed previously in the nation the development produced by a refined and believing aristocracy. For the sophists are the bearers from the passing nation of all the learning, the arts, the accomplishments which humanity then possesses; they bear them wrapt in a coil of corrupt morals, the cause of the nation's falling: they bear them to a new nation, where the old conservative aristocratic party, guardian of the nation's morals, sees nothing but the coil of corruption and shrinks from what is wrapt in it; while the party of progress first seizes with extravagant delight this heritage of human knowledge bequeathed by elder nations, but, as it examines, discovers the deficiency of the store and begins to advance and improve it, and then turns round upon the poor teachers who brought it over, and scoffs at them for their scanty amount of knowledge and their pretensions, which were once just, that the whole of human knowledge was contained in what they taught.

Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ in Ionia had indeed come to Athens in B.C. 456, and lived there many years, the friend of Pericles. But he dared in his writings to express disbelief of the current religion, to talk of the sun not as a god but as a redhot mass, and he was therefore tried for impiety, and only by a voluntary exile escaped the fate which subsequently awaited Socrates. Diogenes of Apollonia in Crete, who wrote on physics, came, like Anaxagoras his contemporary, to Athens, but he, too, was obliged to leave it for the same reason.

But when, some twenty or thirty years later, the

sophists, Gorgias of Leontium in Sicily, Polus of Agrigentum, Hippias of Elis, Prodicus of Keos, Protagoras of Abdera, Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus of Chios, all foreigners, came in rapid succession, almost in a body, to Athens, teaching not merely the early discoveries of the Ionians in physics, but all the showy arts of speech and reasoning which had formed the education of the wealthy and accomplished Sicilian statesmen, they were received as guests into the houses of the Athenian nobles, and welcomed throughout Athens, as Plato says in a striking passage, with an affection so unbounded that they were almost carried about on the shoulders of their admirers *, those rich youths of Athens who seemed suddenly devoured with an inexpressible thirst of knowledge, and imbibed the lessons of the foreign teachers with an avidity that made them resemble a swarm of bees alighting on a bed of spring flowers.

Nor was it without reason that the generous youth of Athens rose before daylight to frequent the lectures of the sophists; for the sophists taught their pupils all that was then known of geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, and the physical sciences, though scanty was the progress yet made in them. They taught also the art of systematic thought, and what was perhaps more fascinating and useful to the young Athenian plutocrat, the art of swaying public assemblies by dexterous and impressive harangues.

The old conservative party, with its ancient code of belief and duties, hated and suspected this new knowledge, and the manners and doctrines of its bearers and their pupils, so different from the old stern morality which the Athenians had learned from their sages, their legislators, their priests, their epic poets, and dramatists; while the men of progress, of whom Socrates and Plato were then the foremost, the men fit to take up the torch from the

* Plato, Rep. x. c. 4, p. 600c.

point where it then was and advance it, quarrelled with the sophists because they made so much of what Socrates saw to be so little, and because they filled the heads of their pupils with a conceit of universal knowledge, when they had taught them nothing but the showy shallow learning which was all the older civilisations had attained. The conservatives of Athens knew little distinction between the learning of the sophists and the progressive spirit of Socrates, for both the sophists and Socrates set up reason and experience against faith and emotions; and so the satire of Aristophanes is addressed against them both without discrimination, and Socrates suffered the attacks of the comedian as the representative of that stock of knowledge with which he was not content, but which he sought to increase and to improve; while he suffered the sentence of death exactly because he was not content with that stock of knowledge, and exactly because he wanted, by increasing it, to extend still further intellectual liberty.

Athens at this time (B.C. 439—410) attained the height of her glory. By her commerce she became the richest, by her arms and navy the most formidable, by her literature and arts the most intellectual and celebrated, of the cities of Greece. Everything that was beautiful and rich and noble was gradually conveyed to Athens, and the magnificent oration of Pericles over her citizens who had fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian war truly ascribes to Athens almost every characteristic which marks that a nation is in its acme.

The first progress to which the progressive Athenian mind subjected the heritage of knowledge brought by the sophists was to subdivide and decompose it. The sophists taught everything. Empedocles, though principally a physical philosopher, taught also rhetoric; and Gorgias, who attained the greatest splendour and magnificence among the rhetoricians of the day, combined with his rhetoric physical speculation. Socrates, after making

himself acquainted with the whole knowledge which was brought by the sophists, abandoned all attempt to improve physical science, and devoted himself to ethics and what are now called metaphysics ; and we shall find that by an invariable law the culture of metaphysics in every nation precedes that of physics.* Men must understand something of their own mental processes before they can successfully use them for physical investigation ; and at the first burst of every national acme there arises, as it were, a purifier† of the mind, whether it be Socrates in Athens, Descartes in France, Bacon in England, to decompose the old methods and systems transplanted from an elder nation, and, casting away the dross, cherish the ore that is in them, and lay down new and surer methods of inquiry whereby the national mind shall be guided and braced for the magnificent field then first opened to its energies. In nations which, like Athens, have previously to the arrival of this heritage of knowledge had a native literature of their own, the new subjects of intellectual employment are taken up and treated with an elegance and delicacy of taste which is wanting in the metaphysical and physical investigations of nations which have never had any elements but the democratic and plutocratic. This characteristic distinguishes remarkably the intellectual productions of Athens from those of the Ionian, Italic, or Sicilian Greeks.

It was not till Plato founded his school that the purely physical philosophers took root in Athens. Then crowded within that portal which no one unversed in geometry might enter, Architas of Tarentum, Laodamas of Thasos, Theætetus of Athens, Amyclas of Heraclea, Eudoxus of Cnydos, Theudius of Magnesia,‡, and many other learned and inquiring men ; and though Plato himself and his more personal followers cultivated the mental habits which lead

* Their names are, in fact, just transposed.

† See Grote, viii. 668—670.

‡ Montucla, *Hist. des Mathem.*, i. 178.

to the pursuit of metaphysical rather than physical science, he is yet reputed to be* the author of the method of geometrical analysis which has ever since been found indispensable for the solution of the more difficult mathematical problems. The metaphysical mood of mind may, however, be said to have prevailed in Athens till the time when Aristotle produced his magnificent speculations. Though full of grand and striking thoughts about the universe, he succeeded but poorly in physical science; but after his time the really progressive intellects of Greece were almost wholly devoted to it, and in the schools of Alexandria the whole sum of human knowledge then attained was collected into encyclopædias. Eratosthenes drew together all the knowledge in geography that was possessed, and formed of it his universal geography; Euclid collected all the geometrical demonstrations which had then been achieved into his immortal *Elements*; and from all parts of Greece the results of Grecian thought were harvested up in the storehouse of the Alexandrian Museum, and the Greeks who, under the shelter of the Lagides in the new centre of commerce, employed themselves in this work struck out, by the comparison and examination of the independent thoughts of their predecessors, new lights and new discoveries in mathematics, astronomy, and other branches of positive science. No new nation arose for centuries to take away from the Greeks the noble prerogative of advancing human knowledge, and though their liberty was gone and the energy of their minds impaired, the Greeks yet applied themselves with success to the intellectual employments which prevail in plutocracies and democracies, viz. physical and material investigations, and produced great and substantial discoveries; so that when we are in danger of scoffing at the Greek slaves of the native despots and of the Macedonians and the Romans, let us remember Archimedes

* Montucla, i. 168.

of Sicily* and the schools of Alexandria, beneath whose porticoes Euclid, Aristarchus, and Hipparchus taught.†

Had another nation existed fit to advance humanity and wrest the torch of progress from the Greeks, the latter must have parted with it about the time when Alexander died : but there being no such nation in the world, the Greeks continued to bear it along, though enfeebled and enslaved ; and the civilisation and intellectual employments of Greece after the death of Aristotle, when aristocracy had been utterly outrooted, and the only social elements were plutocracy and democracy living together, sometimes under the form of a republic, sometimes under the common rule of a despot, illustrate and help to establish this proposition, of which we shall afterwards find abundant proofs, that the only intellectual employments cultivated with success by nations where plutocracy and democracy are the only social elements, are the investigation into, and the application of, the exact sciences. This glory of accomplished civilisation remained in Greece long after every other was gone, but it is the acme of free Greece which substantially closed with the conquests of Alexander the Great, that almost solely, but with some injustice, attracts the interest and gratitude of posterity.

Until the third century B.C. the Romans were a people consisting (after the expulsion of their kings) of two social elements, an aristocracy and a democracy, both unrefined ; the aristocracy military, the democracy agricultural. Under the shelter and as the consequence of the rule of the military aristocracy, had grown up a code of stern morality, some doctrines of which are preserved in the practical maxims attributed to Claudius and Scævola, Scipio and Metellus. These precepts of old aristocrats in

* Born, B.C. 287 ; killed, 212.

† See Matter, *l'École d'Alexandrie*, ii. 92, 93. Humboldt's *Cosmos*, ii. 177.

public and private duty, which they taught and with authority would enforce on the people over whom they ruled, formed, together with the traditional lore of the priests and the augurs, the canopy of belief which overhung the native mind of the Romans, then a simple, brave, and noble people.

Towards the end of the third century before Christ, the Roman aristocracy was gradually becoming refined. Poetry, the species of literature which arises in aristocratic ages, was the first form of Roman literature. It began with the tragedies of Livius Andronicus, a native of Tarentum, who was carried to Rome as a slave, where he first wrote, about 240 B.C. Shortly after came the poet Nævius, who wrote tragedies and comedies; next came Ennius with his tragedies, comedies, and annals; and about B.C. 224 Plautus began to exhibit. We hear of Cæcilius the comic poet about 179 B.C., and Terence in 165 B.C. The conquests of their arms, especially the taking of Syracuse in B.C. 212, introduced to their knowledge the arts and opulence of the Grecian states, and though magnificent works were brought to Rome to adorn the triumph of the general*, and though the poets whom the refinement of the aristocracy called forth, were little else than imitators of the Greeks, and in the shape of translations and adaptations from the great poets of Greece introduced to the Romans the knowledge of the Grecian models, yet the mind of the Romans remained, till past the close of the third century B.C., imbued, as far as ethics and religion went, with the old notions of the native military and aristocratic statesmen.

At last a cargo of sophists arrived at Rome, not known by that name in history, called rather philosophers and rhetors, but in reality the reproduction of the sophists who brought the old learning from Sicily to Athens.

* Liv. xxv. 26—31, 40. Plut. Marc. 14—19. Diod. xxvi. Fr. 18—20.

We first hear of these bearers of the old learning to the new nation by being told that they were banished. They came, undoubtedly, to teach the Roman youth doctrines and ideas subversive of the old code of morals and belief, under which their brave and simple ancestors had formed and reared a mighty nation. In 160 B.C. the senate of the old warriors took counsel respecting these philosophers and rhetors, and decreed that the Prætor should be charged with the duty of expelling them from Rome.* Four years later Carneades the academician, Diogenes the stoic, and Critolaus the peripatetic, were sent by the Athenians on an embassy to Rome. After the object of their mission was accomplished they stayed to teach to the Roman youth all the knowledge which mankind had then attained. The Fathers of the Country were shocked that their sons should be led away from the field of Mars, and the active training that was to make them conquerors of the world, to hear some slavish Greeks deny the existence of the gods, and argue with equal plausibility for or against justice; and Cato, the representative of the old school of aristocratic statesmen, successfully urged the senate to prevent this corruption of the Roman youth. The check was but temporary, for in B.C. 92 the Censors had occasion to issue an edict to this effect: "We have received information that men who call themselves Latin rhetoricians have established a new kind of education for the youth of the state, who flock to their lectures and waste whole days in listening to them. Our ancestors have ordained what ought to be taught to their children, and what lectures they ought to frequent. This new-fangled teaching, contrary to the usages and institutions of our ancestors, is wrong, and we disapprove of it; and we hereby give notice of our disapprobation both to the teachers who keep these institutions and to the pupils who frequent them."†

* Suetonius, *De Clar. Rhet.* i.

† *Ibid.*

This was the struggle at Rome against the sophists. We all know that old Cato, who led it for a time, at last gave way, and went to school in his old age to learn Greek ; and in the second and first centuries B.C. the Athenian sophists were made welcome in Rome, in the same way and for the same reasons as the Sicilian sophists had been made welcome in Athens. They came to teach to the young and ambitious Romans the arts of dialectics and oratory ; arts especially necessary for the statesmen of every country at the moment when its acme arrives, for reasons which I will afterwards explain, and necessary especially in Rome, where the patrons pleaded the causes of their clients. Oratorical power was the first stepping-stone to office ; by it the *Novi Homines* took rank above the old families, while the latter were compelled to resort to it to maintain their position. Scipio Africanus, Lælius, and Rutilius became the intimate friends of Panætius the stoic. Tuberon and Mutius Scævola likewise enlisted among his pupils. Cato of Utica sat at the feet of Antipater of Tyre, and Lucullus, eager to learn the doctrines of every school, brought to Rome a magnificent library ; and the houses of the leading Roman nobles were thought ill furnished, unless they contained a Greek guest who taught to the youth of the family the arts which Zeno the Eleatic, Parmenides, Empedocles, Gorgias, and Tisias had invented, and Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the schools of their disciples, had improved.*

In this way oratory and philosophy became part of every noble Roman's necessary education. We know how successfully they cultivated the former. Of the philosophical learning of the Greeks they had, as was natural for an aristocracy, very little sympathy with the physical or exact sciences, but very great sympathy with the metaphysical ; and while the sterner conservative party among

* See particularly Cicero's account of his own training, *Brutus*, c. 90 ; and see *Cic. De Rep.* i. 8.

the old statesmen attached themselves to the stoical doctrines, the men who had more newly risen to wealth, in short the plutocracy, then becoming important, enrolled themselves among the followers of Epicurus.

But Rome admitted with perfect freedom all the sects of philosophers, and it became the habit of the young Romans to pass from one school to another, so as to acquire a superficial knowledge of all their leading doctrines*. There was perfect intellectual liberty, the truest mark of the national acme; while every one knows how, in a material point of view, Rome, after the middle of the second century B.C., stood foremost in the world.

But there arose no purifier of the mind. The learning of the older nations was taken up zealously by the Romans, but they never decomposed it, or threw off the coil of corruption in which it was enveloped; and, almost immediately on receiving it, became themselves corrupt.

What was the consequence? No progress was made by the Romans in any branch of human knowledge, jurisprudence alone excepted.

For want of a rival, they, by the mere power of brute force, remained in the front rank of nations; but the Roman acme, in its truest sense, was extremely short, extending from about the year 155 B.C. to A.D. 14. After that time, though wise and benevolent emperors encouraged literature and science and established professorships, what was accomplished? In actual progress nothing.

Then came the dark ages. Why were they dark? Because there was no nation in its acme.

Those were ages unlettered, if it is meant that those who read did not cast fresh light upon the old stock of learning; barbarous, if it is meant that the elegance and refinement of literature were wanting; but hostile to learning, or persecutors of the learned, the men of those ages surely

* Degerando, iii. 176.

were not. What is more striking than, in the savage history of those unquiet centuries when every noble was a brigand every commoner a serf, to read the universal respect, the eager appetite, for learning. When the fame of an Abelard spread through Europe, students flocked in thousands from the most distant countries to listen to his teaching; and, like the class of educated sculptors collected from all nations and bound together by discipline and rules of art, who went through Europe erecting those cathedrals which now excite our wonder almost as much for their resemblance to each other as for their architectural beauties, bodies of masters and scholars were constantly roving from one town to another with a gregariousness which the absence of printed books and the scarcity of manuscripts rendered necessary for all who would cultivate learning. The magistrates of the towns in which they sojourned, perceiving the advantages of so great a resort, gave these wandering flocks of scholars every kind of local immunity, in the hope of inducing them to settle, and kings and popes vied with each other in conceding them the privileges necessary for their establishment as independent corporations; so that the mere lecturing of a popular professor was often the means of founding one of these independent societies, governed by their own laws and statutes, exercising after the fashion of other guilds a local monopoly, not merely of teaching, but even of bookselling, and generally maintaining, in spite of some civic jealousies, an intimate communication with all similar bodies throughout Christendom. The "poor scholar" of the middle ages was the true cosmopolite. He strapped his satchel on his back, and walked from one station of learning to another without troubling himself about frontiers or nationalities. He could talk Latin, the common idiom of the learned; and, as a student, he was privileged by the decrees of every potentate of Europe, even to the privilege of begging his way. He might wander unmolested from one fixed university to

another, or, herding in the train of some distinguished master, he might help to found a new university wherever the not-unwelcome visitor should permanently settle.

Thus learning was in honour ; and for subtlety, industry, and extent of research, who in any age, in any country, has surpassed Albert, Aquinas or Duns, not isolated instances, but the best known of an uncounted number of indefatigable sages, who, sheltered in their cloisters from all the distractions, while they were debarred from all the pleasures of ordinary life, devoted to their study minds of a magnificent calibre and constitutions trained to labour.

Yet with what result? From the fall of the Romans to the rise of the Italian republic not a single step was made in any part of Europe, to advance that magnificent course of human progress which we traced among the ancients, and shall have to trace among the moderns. At first sight, it would appear almost inexplicable that a career so long, so superior to common interruptions, should suddenly have been exposed to a cessation nearly fatal ; but this wonder should cease when the comparative history of nations is as well observed as the history of individual nations. For it is only after a certain period in its own career is attained, that a nation connects itself with the general advance of human improvement : and after advancing together with it for a while, the nation enfeebled yields to the competitor that presses next behind it in the race. A succession of nations in the times of antiquity, each ready at the right moment to take the place of its failing predecessor, and a yet more rapid succession among the moderns, who have sometimes seemed rather to be in rivalry than in sequence, have diverted attention from the real cause of this remarkable interregnum. That cause may be explained in a sentence. Every nation has had its dark age, but, whether from accident or from design, it has so happened that, except at the period immediately succeeding the fall of the Roman empire, the dark age of any one nation has always been

contemporaneous with the acme of some other. Never before and never since, have the dark ages of all existing nations synchronised. And it is in the fact, that when the Roman civilisation died away, there was no nation (the Arabians not excepted) advanced beyond that preliminary stage which, however well suited to the development of poetry and the fine arts, seems incompatible with the progress of exact knowledge,—it is in this that we must seek the simple explanation of the phenomenon.

And the consequences are far more striking than the cause. Never previously had a nation employed itself with the sciences till it was fitted to be instrumental in their advance ; but then for the first time (and we have seen no repetition), intellectual greatness was, as it were, thrust upon nations not yet mature for its reception ; and the history of the middle ages presents to us therefore not only the common type of the modes of thinking prevalent in the infancy of all nations, but also proves the total inability of society in such a stage, when put to the test, to make a single step in the advance of positive science.

To wonder, not to inquire ; to attribute every event, not directly referable to human force, to the immediate and capricious agency of an inscrutable power ; to desire a knowledge of what is said by authority, rather than of what is ; to submit the mind to a spirit of mysticism, the product of a poetical confusion of ideas, blended with a servile fear of the unseen ; to regard theosophy as the only honest kind of intellectual occupation,—these are the mental habits of young and uneducated nations. The form and expression given to them may vary in different instances, but the spirit and essence are everywhere the same ; and the middle ages teach us that a pure equally with an impure religion may be abused for the purpose of founding on this mental disposition an absolute hierarchy. But the curious and unexampled phenomena presented by the mental history of the middle ages, is the subjec-

tion of the knowledge acquired by the ancients to the pantheological spirit of the moderns. It is not till the mingled wonder and fear, the first feelings which dominate in the mind, as well of nations as of individuals, have yielded to a spirit of bolder inquiry, and a desire to know the causes of things, that the age of science has commenced; and it is curious to observe in the method of study pursued before the Reformation, the productions of a mature submitted to the treatment of an immature mind. The child playing at manly occupations, is no vain metaphor, but the true explanation of the striking failure.

It was not unnatural for the wiser spirits of the middle ages (which ended with the twelfth century) to fear that a period of hopeless darkness had come over humanity, and that man was destined for evermore to be a mere repeating animal; but no one who looks at those ages from the present will regard them as ages of hopeless darkness. They were occupied with the formation of new nations possessing all the characteristics and essentials of progressive communities in the stages of national progress, anterior to the stage in which national progress is identified with the progress of humanity.

The principal of these characteristics was the growth and consolidation of a military aristocracy, combined and leagued with a powerful priesthood. Under the united encouragement of these powers arose the code of morals and belief which was imposed on the nations without resistance. The morality taught by the priests consisted of the doctrines of our Saviour, who, if regarded from a merely human point of view, was the greatest moral teacher that the world has seen; the morality of the aristocracy consisted of the rules of chivalry, one of which was that no nobler employment existed for the soldier, than to fight the battles of the Cross.

These are the ages to which we look back as the ages of poetry and romance, when the actions of men were lofty and grand, when they descended to nothing petty;

and, magnificent and striking in their virtues, they were not less so in their vices.

First of the aristocracies of modern Europe, the Florentine became refined. Then rose Dante*, not a mere poet, but a great moral teacher, who came to form into shape and beauty that rough but noble morality that had made Florence the queen of cities. We know the quick succession of Petrarch and Boccaccio †, men versed in ancient literature, though the "revival of letters" did not really take place till the middle of the fourteenth century.‡

Now scholasticism was the mere product of the theological mind applying itself to ancient logic, and in its very nature was hopelessly stationary and unfruitful; it was the barren learning of the ecclesiastics who were contemporary with the rude but noble warriors who founded the aristocracies of Europe. In every nation it vanished when that aristocracy became refined and a native literature arose. This happened in Florence first, and in the other states of Italy almost immediately afterwards. Petrarch's was the last voice raised in Italy against the "insanum et clamoratum scholasticorum vulgus," each commentator puffing his own wares.§ Before his death scholasticism perished from Italy, and the speedy refinement of the aristocracy, accompanied by its political enfeeblement and the rise of the "magnifici cittadini,"|| whom commerce had brought into wealth and power, gave a ready welcome to the literature and sciences of the ancients.

* Born 1265, died 1321.

† Born in Tuscany, 1313, died 1375.

‡ See Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii. 580. The dark ages were from the 6th to the 11th. The 12th and 13th centuries were marked by the beginning of the study of jurisprudence; see Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii. 578. C. J. Fox exclaimed, after talking of Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio, "Revival of letters!—where would you begin? with the Medici? then you leave those men behind you."

§ Petrarch, *De Ignorantia Scrip. et aliorum*.

|| Speech of Lorenzo, in Machiavelli, *Ist. Flor.* lib. viii.

The Sophists came to modern Italy in the first half of the 14th century. Their advent is called in history the "Revival of Letters." They were the Greeks who fled from the civil troubles of Constantinople, and came to teach the rising plutocracies of Florence, Venice, Genoa, and the other states of Italy the language and the arts of Greece. The "*Scholasticorum vulgus*," to use Petrarch's phrase, received them with hatred; but the plutocratic element was then the strongest element in the Italian states, and that—like the plutocracy of ancient Sicily, Athens, and Rome—received these teachers with enthusiasm; and the rapid decay of the old, stern, warlike nobility of Italy, who were forced to live in towns, and became soon merged in the refined and elegant progeny of the rich merchants, explains why we do not read in the history of modern Italy of the same stubborn opposition to the introduction of the foreign learning as we do in the histories of ancient Greece and Rome.

But as far as concerns the individual bearers of the old learning to the new nation, the Constantinopolitans who bore it to Italy have no better character than the Sicilian sophists who bore it to Athens, or the Athenian rhetors who bore it to Rome. The gratitude of posterity for having been taught Greek appears to me to have gained for these deserting sailors from a sinking ship a better fame than they deserve. Some of them were sent by the emperor as ambassadors to implore aid against the Turks, and, being offered comfortable berths in an Italian university, forgot their country and its troubles, and, like Carneades, stayed to teach the eager youth of the rising nation the learning of the falling one. It is curious, bearing in mind Plato's description of the triumphant reception of the sophists in Athens, to read of the sensation which the advent of these Greeks excited in Italy. Manuel Chrysoloras, for instance, sent as an envoy by the Emperor Manuel to implore aid from the Western Powers, became professor at Florence. "At that time" (about 1390), says

Leonard Aretin, afterwards Chancellor of the republic of Florence, "I was a student of civil law, but my soul was inflamed with the love of letters, and I bestowed some application on the sciences of logic and rhetoric. On the arrival of Manuel I hesitated whether I should desert my legal studies, or relinquish this golden opportunity, and thus, in the ardour of youth, I communed with my own mind. . . . Of professors and scholars in civil law a sufficient supply will always be found in our universities; but a teacher, and such a teacher of the Greek language, if he once be suffered to escape, may never afterwards be retrieved. Convinced by these reasons, I gave myself to Chrysoloras."* After that time the learning and literature of the ancients became familiar to the rich youth of all the states of Italy. In none was it more cultivated than in Florence in the 15th century. Filelfo came to Florence in 1429, and lectured† every day on Cicero's *Tusculanus*, Livy's first decad, Cicero's *Rhetoric*, *Letters*, and *Orations*, the *Iliad*, Terence, Thucydides, and Xenophon, besides a daily lecture on *Morals*. And Florence undoubtedly led the way in the idolatry for genius and learning then prevalent throughout Italy. "To collect books and antiques, to found professorships, to patronise men of learning, became almost universal fashions among the great. The spirit of literary research allied itself to that of commercial enterprise. Every place to which the merchant princes of Florence extended their gigantic traffic, from the bazaars of the Tigris to the monasteries of the Clyde, was ransacked for medals and manuscripts. Architecture, painting, and sculpture were munificently encouraged. Indeed it would be difficult to name an Italian of eminence, during the period of which we speak, who, whatever may have been his general character, did not at least affect a love of letters and of the

* Ap. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. lxvi.

† Ambrosii Traversarii *Epist.* p. 1016.

arts.”* To be at the head of the states of Italy was then to be at the head of all the kingdoms of the earth; and the Florentines had been for a century, to quote the pointed phrase of Boniface VIII., the fifth element of the world.†

Florence then enjoyed all the internal characteristics of a nation in its acme—perfect freedom for all social elements—the existence of an aristocracy without its predominance, which had ceased from the middle of the 13th century—and the existence of a plutocracy without the consequent extinction of other orders. The family of the Medici, who a century later obtained the sovereignty, were then but the most illustrious among the rising plutocrats.

Thus the Italians, with Florence at their head, bore along, during the 14th and 15th centuries, the torch of human knowledge. They did not, like the ancient Romans, merely receive and repeat the knowledge of their predecessors, but they decomposed and examined it; and though later ages have been unjust to them in this respect, and have lauded Descartes as the first decomposer of the ancient philosophy, yet in truth the honour belongs to Italy. The scholastic doctrines had long been overthrown in Italy‡—the earliest nation of modern times—

* Macaulay, *Essay on Machiavelli*.

† When Boniface VIII. celebrated at Rome the jubilee of 1300, it appeared that twelve of the ambassadors from the different states and sovereigns on that occasion were Florentines. On this singular event the Pope is said to have asserted that the Florentines were a fifth element of the world. Roscoe, *Illustrations of the Life of Lorenzo di Medici*, p. 77.

‡ Libri ap. Whewell, *Hist. of Inductive Sciences*, ii. 126, says, “If we had to write the history of philosophy, we should prove by a multitude of facts that it was the Italians who overthrew the ancient idol of philosophers. Men go on incessantly repeating that the struggle was begun by Descartes, and they proclaim him the legislator of modern philosophers. But when we examine the philosophical writings of Fracastoro, of Benedette, of Cardan, and above all, those of Galileo; when we see on all sides energetic protests raised against the peripatetic doctrines, we ask what then remained for the inventor of vortices to

before Descartes appeared, and there, for the first time since the days of ancient Greece, real progress was effected. In all the exact sciences, the earliest cultivators of modern times were in Italy. Whether we trace the progress of the loftier speculations of mathematics, or the humbler study of anatomy, or of the science which peculiarly belongs to commercial nations—the science of statistics—it is to Italy we must look for their first dawn in modern times; and though the achievements of later nations have been more magnificent, we ought always to honour most highly among the bearers of the torch of human progress those who first, after more than ten centuries of stagnation, carried it forward by new and brilliant discoveries.*

The glory of Italy was unhappily short, and the torch was handed over to the German cities before any very

do in overturning the natural philosophy of Aristotle? In addition to this, the memorable labours of the school of Corenza, of Telesius, of Giordano Bruno, of Campanella, the writings of Patricius, who was besides a good geometer, of Nizolius, and of the other metaphysicians of the same epoch, prove that the ancient philosophy had already lost its empire on that side the Alps when Descartes threw himself upon the enemy now put to the rout. The yoke was cast off in Italy, and all Europe had only to follow the example, without its being necessary to give a new impulse to real science."

* To show the obligations of the human race to Italy, it may be instructive to refer to the accounts of Mondino, the father of modern anatomy, who taught at Bologna in 1315; of Fabricius of Aquapendente, professor at Padua for fifty years, under whom Harvey studied; of Hermolaus Barbarus (born at Venice, 1454), one of the most learned men of his age, and the author of the "*Traité de l'Accord de l'Astronomie avec la Médecine*;" of Tartaglia of Milan, and his rival, Cardan; and of Dominique Cassini of Bologna; and to the passages in Beckman, in which he attributes to the Venetians the invention of double-entry book-keeping (*Hist. of Inventions*, i. 1), to the Florentines the invention of insurance (i. 389), and other minor but very useful discoveries (i. 34. 62, ii. 100, iv. 390). See also Anderson's *Origin of Commerce*, i. 408; Hallam's *Middle Ages*, iii. 393; Playfair's *Second Dissertation to the Encyclop. Brit.*; and the accounts which may be found in many books of the Italian invention of copper-plate engraving, of paper from linen rags, of crystal glass mirrors and earthenware imitation of porcelain.

extensive progress had been accomplished; but Italy attracts our regret at its early fall the more, because it never allowed the march of human progress to flag while under its guidance, nor retained the lead among the nations, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, after its capacity for the leadership had ceased. On the contrary, the wonderful anticipations of Leonardo da Vinci, who foresaw the discoveries that made Galileo, and Kepler, and Maestlin, and Maurolycus, and Castelli, and others famous; who prediscovers the system of Copernicus; laid down a century before his time the great axiom of the father of experimental philosophy, and thought out the theories which geologists have propounded only in the present generation*, — his anticipations indeed foreshadowed what Italy would have accomplished had it longer retained the leadership of the world; and the name of Galileo, if Italy had none other to boast, would alone entitle her to a magnificent rank in the class of progressive nations.

We speak of Italy as one nation, though in truth it was but a cluster of independent and rival states, as we speak of Greece as a nation, though the Panhellenic feeling was, during the days of Grecian greatness, scarcely less weak than the feeling of union arising from a common language and a common civilisation which, if it had been allowed its due operation, might have made the glory of Italy more lasting but perhaps not more striking. Indeed it is difficult to estimate how much of the activity and energy of the little republics was due to their rivalry; and this good at least, their entire independence and separation from each other has secured to the science of history, that we are able to trace in each of them, with great distinctness, the characteristics belonging to the social forces which were present in no two states in the

* Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, i. 323. Humbolt's *Cosmos*, ii. 285; xciv. and iii. 10. Whewell, *Hist. Inductive Sciences*, ii. 125. Most of Leonardo da Vinci's physical works belong to the year 1498.

same proportion ; for example, in Florence we see all the effects of a military aristocracy which soon became refined and literary, and reduced to an equality with a commercial democracy ; while in Venice we trace the consequences of a total absence of a military aristocracy, and of the growth of a plutocracy which ultimately mastered the democracy out of which it had arisen.

The next civilisation which took up and advanced the progress of humanity, was composed of elements still more unlike to and unconnected with each other than the Italian ; yet common interests bound them together into a commercial and political alliance, and we think and speak of the free towns of Germany and Flanders, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as members of a common order and civilisation which, while Italy was in its acme, arose to power and prestige, and when the energy of Italy declined, stepped forward to the Primacy of the world.

How many an interesting hour is often spent in reading the small beginnings of those centres of busy and humble industry which afterwards burst forth into the opulent and splendid cities of the Hanseatic league ! So early as the twelfth century Flanders was celebrated for its woollen manufactures, and in the fourteenth it was resorted to by the merchants of every state. But it was not till the beginning of the sixteenth century that the real glory of the Flemish and German towns appeared in its truest magnificence. By that time Antwerp, Bruges, Nuremberg, Frankfort, and Augsburg were full of opulence and splendour. Argosies returned from every clime laden with its richest products, and the overflowing wealth of the new plutocracy called forth the school of Durer and the school of Holbein, to adorn the halls which resounded with the most elegant and subtle discussions of literature and philosophy.

The knowledge which humanity had acquired came not to these German cities without the usual antagonism

on the part of those who were brought up in the old code of morals and belief, and few contests have been more celebrated than that between the old scholastic theologians of the German universities, and the "Humanists" or "Poets," as they were styled, the sophists of the period, who, with Reuchlin at their head, introduced about 1513 the knowledge of the arts and learning of the ancients into the circle of subjects taught to the generous youth of these German towns.* Blood constantly flowed in the cause of literature, and the teachers of Greek were continually expelled, to return however at last with renewed strength, and finally to lead the way for that great uprising of the national spirit which brought about the Reformation, — a crisis which was most materially assisted by the revolt of the new learning and the free and inquiring spirit which it engendered against the intolerance of the old theology, seeking to retain its dominion too long. And throughout Europe (except Italy), the sophists, who sought to introduce to nations hitherto barbarous the knowledge then acquired by humanity, became in time identified with the Protestants. John XXII. wrote to his legate at Paris to look after the teachers of strange languages, lest their dogmas be as strange. "Heretic" was one of the gentlest terms used by the "Trojans," and it certainly was not unfounded, for most of the scholars who frequented these new teachers were like Ascham, who as he became a Grecian, became a Protestant; and so important to the cause of the Reformation was this overthrow of the old German scholastic notions by Reuchlin and his allies, that Luther (December 1518) acknowledges that "he only followed in Reuchlin's steps, only consummated his victory with inferior strength, but not inferior courage, in breaking the teeth of the Behemoth."†

* See especially Sir W. Hamilton's *Essay on the Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* (Discussions on Philosophy).

† Hamilton's *Discussions*, 215, 216. Naudé (*Considérations Poli-*

Immediately after Reuchlin, came the great men of those German towns who assisted the advance of humanity. The sum of the knowledge hitherto attained was collected in the *Margarita Philosophica* of Reisch, Prior of the Charterhouse of Freiburg at the close of the fifteenth century; and from that time the history of human knowledge is to be read in the history of the German towns till the Dutch stepped forward to their place. Galileo—the last of Italians—still, by his single energies, retarded Italy from falling utterly to the background. But Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Stevinus of Bruges, Kepler, George Purbach, Regiomontanus, and Walther of Nuremberg*, all these and the long catalogue of scientific and inventive men of whom they were the leaders, will attract for ever the historian of the human race to the German civilisation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Indeed, in the grandest of the exact sciences there was absolutely no progress from the time of the ancients till the free towns of Germany arose. There was none in astronomy from Ptolemy, who died about A.D. 150, till Copernicus, who flourished about A.D. 1500, for the Arabians effected no substantial progress. In mechanical knowledge not a single step was made from the time of Archimedes, who died B.C. 212, till that of Stevinus, who was born A.D. 1548†; while Conrad Gesner of Zurich and Basle (flourished 1550), was the first who advanced natural history beyond the point where Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Dioscorides had left it.‡

Among the leading nations of the world we ought not to omit Spain and Portugal:—Portugal, which began with Henry the Navigator a period of meteoric splendour—a burst into eminence, like the sudden burst of a

tiques sur les Coups-d'état, cap. iv.) traces the connection between the revival of letters and the Reformation. “Le trop grand nombre de collèges, séminaires, étudiants, joints à la facilité d'imprimer et transporter les livres, ont déjà bien ébranlé les sectes et la religion.”

* Humbolt's *Cosmos*, iii. 56.

† Montucla, *Hist. des Mathem.* ii. 180.

‡ Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii. 465.

Swedish summer—and continued till the time of Louis Camoens to make a series of discoveries, which has written her name as the Mother of the Sextant, and the names of her sons, Diaz, Gama, Cabral, and Albuquerque, on the most enduring tablets in the temple of fame:—Spain, which colonised a new hemisphere with the European race, but has done little beyond that to assist the progress of our knowledge. These nations, for reasons I will hereafter develop, scarce received the learning which is the inheritance of nations, and such of it as they did receive they did not decompose, and therefore could not improve and increase the store. The old codes of faith and of belief which belong to a military aristocracy and an organised priesthood were never dispelled, but hovered over them in the periods of their greatness, and closed in upon them with a deadening darkness ere they had fairly seized the torch of human knowledge.

As the German towns succeeded to the Italian republics, so the Dutch republic succeeded to the German towns. At the close of the sixteenth century Holland was still, in the phrase of its native, Erasmus, a “beer and butter land;” but learning had already come, and the capacity of progress soon after followed, so that during the seventeenth century Holland may justly be said to have been the centre of the world’s improvement. To Holland came the men of other countries, who afterwards were to render those countries famous, so that while we honour Holland for having produced jurists and moral philosophers like Grotius; mathematicians, natural philosophers, and astronomers like Huyghens; antiquaries like Gruter; statesmen like the brothers De Witt; mechanical discoverers like Lippersberg; painters like Paul Potter and the Vandevelde; we ought also to remember that in Holland lived, by his own choice, during the most important years of his life, Descartes, the first who in France decomposed the ancient knowledge, and led the way to discovery; and from Holland and Denmark the

French government imported the exact sciences in the persons of Huyghens and Rômer; while Balzac, the most eloquent of historians in France, and the friend of Richelieu, resorted, in 1612, to Holland, to study the science of statesmanship.

When Holland declined, France and England rose to the first eminence. Why have they been such deadly foes; why has the world been shaken for centuries with their tremendous conflicts? Throughout history this truth is ever exemplified, and shines with unclouded brilliancy, that *the principal and epoch-forming wars of the world, which have been waged between civilised nations, have been wars of succession*—wars in which a young and vigorous nation has sought to wrest the world's sceptre from the older monarch-nation which holds it. Such were the wars of Macedon, unfit to retain the sceptre it had seized—such the wars of the Romans against the Macedonians, the Greeks and the Carthaginians—such the wars of the Germans, the Spaniards, and the French against Italy—such the wars of the French and the English against the Dutch. But to all these conflicts there came with comparative speed the inevitable end—the success of the fresh and vigorous over the rich and enfeebled. One species of war there is yet more deadly, because more lasting, and of uncertain issue—the war of emulation between two nations, each strong and vigorous, and rapid in the race, each with one hand clasped round the torch, while with the other it seeks to thrust away its rival. There has yet been but a single example of this—the example of France and England, two nations starting into prominence about the same time, and, though pursuing a career of internal development vastly different, yet arriving simultaneously at their acme, and continuing in it for centuries. As the dark ages were dark because there was no nation in its acme, so the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been the most magnificent and brilliant because there have been two nations in their

acme. The bitter conflicts of these nations are the price that humanity has paid for its more rapid and solid advance, and these conflicts will never permanently cease till France—already showing unmistakeable signs of its unfitness long to continue the rivalry—shall fall back from the race, and take its place among the stationary nations who, in a peaceful repose, look on at the struggles and triumphs of their successor nation, adopt its inventions, read its literature, imitate its fashions, employ its busy artisans, but of their own energy contribute nothing to the cause of progress. To such nations we may apply the lines of Shakspeare :—

“He must be taught and train’d, and bid to go forth
A barren-spirited fellow ; one that feeds
On objects, arts, and imitations,
Which, out of use and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion : do not talk of him
But as a property.”

They may rejoin with the adage, “Happy is the people whose annals are vacant.” And dare we contradict it ?

What power is it that suddenly calls forth from the mute inglorious ranks the nation that is to sway the world, and inspires her robust though homely and rude sons with that irresistible energy and ambition which leads them to conquest, discovery, and power, and draws to them all the intellectual activity and refinement of the world?—what, with as sudden and all-powerful hand, dashes them down from their proud eminence, and sends them back to their obscurity? Does that power act by caprice and whim, or are there ever to be found in the monarch-nations characteristics which fit them for their exaltation and are necessary for it, and prove that the Almighty never summons to the pride of place and power nations which do not fulfil the conditions imposed by Him on the aspirants for the Primacy of the world? Does

history enable us to foretell when an obscure nation shall come forward, and when the prominent must fall back?

This is, in my judgment, the most magnificent theme that can be submitted to the mind of man. It is a theme untouched before, and towards the discussion of which I ask your assistance, through the investigations contained in this study.

National Acme. the combination of several social and political elements, co-existent, and co-powerful; one of which failing there is no home.

CHAP. IX.

THE NATIONAL ACME. — THE PLACE OF LITERATURE IN NATIONAL PROGRESS.

THEY pass before us in review the successive Primates of the world, each in its acme. What are the characteristics of a nation in its acme?

Now, throughout the national development there are two distinct currents of civilisation and refinement; the one derived from the conquering or quasi-conquering race — the Homeric; the other from the conquered — the Hesiodic. The first is the earliest in its development, but it never arrives at any high pitch of development without a very considerable contemporary progress in the second. The national acme is the moment when these two currents arrive at a nearly equal pitch of development, and contribute, each after its different fashion, but in an almost equal proportion, to the glory of the national civilisation.

We shall best arrive at an appreciation of the true nature of these two currents of civilisation and refinement by seizing the prominent characteristics of each of them, and laying down in distinct propositions the principal characteristics which belong to each of them, and which form their several contributions to the glory of the national acme.

First, then, I would lay down *that the literature of a country is the contribution of its aristocracy to the glory of the national acme*; in other words, *the national acme is the period when the literature of a country arrives at its*

highest perfection, and it is part of the civilisation derived from the conquering race.

• Georges

Before the division of labour drew a distinction between the relation of fact and fiction, the poet (using that term as the vulgar synonym for a metrical author) was the only instrument for the diffusion of secular knowledge. His verses made public the advice of experienced agriculturists; they put into a form that men could easily remember the title to estates; they communicated meteorological knowledge, and had always something to say about the functions of the celestial bodies. They adorned the narratives of travellers, and the exploits of heroism. They supplied precedents for love-making, and rendered unnecessary the art of the funeral orator; nor were those who listened to their rhapsodies without some ideas on natural and supernatural history. This universal man of letters performed his work sufficiently for the haughty tribesman or the rude homely people who lived by the culture of the soil, each man the owner of the land he tilled and the herds he tended. The Scald of Iceland, who was in himself a whole guild of literature, and included the entire tribe of authors and a branch of the legal profession (for the Scalds were the earliest conveyancers of real property, and drew up titles in verse to the estates held by udal tenure), is as good a specimen as we can select of the primeval Jack-of-all-styles. Even the Highlanders of Scotland, so late as the close of the 16th century, a lively, impassioned, and poetical race, had no other literature but the minstrels' lays.* It is

* It is proposed to consider the Nibelungen Lied, not as the production of a race of bards like the Homeric rhapsodists, but to belong to a state of society still more primitive, when every man was his own poet. "In those days there were no poets, there were only singers; there was no art of poetry, but only a song which issued from the heart of the nation. In this song, the burden of which was familiar to all, every one joined: the harp was passed from hand to hand, and in chorus all the voices rose together."—*Leaves' Life of Goethe*, i. 244.

said there are actually now in existence a people in the Foero Islands whose intellectual state faithfully represents that of the whole of Europe in the middle ages.* All the subjects on which men write — every separate line of thought — have been drawn out of the general mass on which the bards of the old saga operated. And the division of labour has enabled the artists in each branch of literary composition to arrive at a higher pitch of excellence than was attained by the earlier and more universal genius. Whoever is ambitious to make a systematic history of the subjects of literary exercise might do so by decomposing the Scald, and tracing the growth of the various races of authors which were once, as it were, enclosed in his loins. The process is to be performed by the rules of Herculean arithmetic. Take a primitive author and divide him into any number of parts; each springs up an independent author.

The first step towards such a division, as it is the first step towards national progress, is the invasion of conquest. The early Scald became then bisected into Homer (singular or plural as you please), the poet of the conquerors, who sang of heroes and kings, and the gods their ancestors, and Hesiod, whom the later Greeks called the poet of the Helots, or subject race, because he taught how the tiller of the ground should spend his days.†

As national progress goes on, and the aristocracy on the one hand becomes more cultivated and refined, while the populace on their part, by commerce and conglomeration into towns, feel the necessity for a more extensive practical knowledge, Homer is drawn out into the dramatic poet, the poet in the modern sense of the term, that is, the soliloquist whose emotions are the links of associa-

* Laing's *Denmark*, p. 349.

† Our Amoibeian eclogues, which used to be sung and sold at village fairs, contests between workmen for the superior worth and dignity of their several callings, were our earliest Hesiodic literature. See *Coleridge's Friend*, iii. 82.

tion by which his ideas are connected together*, the historian†, the orator, the elegant essayist; and out of the Hesiodic element spring the dry writers on practical subjects, the composers of manuals of useful arts, which precede scientific treatises as art precedes science. The former class of writers, growing up under aristocratic favour, create what are called the belles-lettres, while the latter keep in humble abeyance till the social elevation of the populace calls them into preeminence; for literature and fine arts are the creatures of the noblesse, science of the populace and plebs.

In order that a national literature should be brought within any respectable approximation towards perfection, there are two necessary political conditions: first, Social inequality; second, A refined taste in the higher classes of the state.

The principal motive in every artist of the pen is either a desire of bread or personal eminence. The two desires are usually combined, but combined in different proportions. In an aristocratic society mere wealth is not of account, and personal merit gives a higher position than newly-acquired riches. The adventurer, therefore, seeks rather for eminence than a fortune; and eminence is to be acquired only by merit. Hence in such a society each artist aims rather at perfection than a multitude of works. In a democratic society a reputation for extraordinary ability is in disfavour: men are socially equal, and silently estimated by their wealth; and that which con-

* Mill, Dissert. i. 80.

† The great master of Roman history has traced its origin among the lays of the old Roman patricians—the Homers of Italy. “Among the ancient Romans it was the custom, says Cato, for the praises of great men to be sung to the flute at banquets.”—*Cicero Tusc. Quæst.* iv. 2. *Niebuhr, H. R.* iv. 12, 13. So at the tables of the German knights stories were read aloud, which were founded either on the events of the Old Testament or the heroic deeds of the Romans.—*Niebuhr, H. R.* iv. 93.

duces most to wealth wins to itself the choicest spirits of the age ; that which pays best, not which is most excellent, is pursued. Hence, in the first case, literature is a profession, and each man aims to excel in it ; in the second it is a trade, and each man tries how he can make most money by it. It is manifest in which the art has most chance of approaching perfection.

I have no doubt the mind of the learned reader has by this time suggested to him many objections entirely subversive of my positions, and perhaps I cannot do better than discuss a few most likely to occur. First, for the instance of Rome. Literature, you will say, flourished there after a despotism had annihilated the independence of the patricians. True enough ; but then while there was social inequality there was not sufficient refinement. It was not till about the time of Cæsar that the patricians of Rome became sufficiently soft and luxurious to encourage literature as one of the fine arts ; so that, as Lord Shaftesbury says*, “ ’Twas the fate of Rome to have scarce an intermediate age, or single period of time between the rise of arts and fall of liberty.” In the time of Augustus there was the necessary refinement in the patrician wreck that lingered round his court, and enough social inequality was left to encourage for a while the two poets, who have made the “ Augustan era ” proverbial for literary excellence ; for in a society where all men are equal slaves, the only distinctions are those of court favour, and in Rome court favour, owing to the influence of one of the old patricians, was lavished upon literary men. But this lasts only for a short time, and in fact the Augustan splendour was rather the effect of the former age of aristocracy. It was the gorgeous illumination left in the heavens after the sun had sunk beneath the horizon. Not all the efforts of the Hadrians and Antonines could produce a single poem, statue, or piece of architecture that could show itself be-

* Characteristics. Advice to an Author, p. 219.

sides the productions of those nations where arts and letters are fostered by the encouragement of a refined aristocracy, and inspired by the rising liberty of the commons.

Next let us take the instance of Athens. The national acme and the flourishing epoch of its arts and letters was immediately after the Persian war—the period when the aristocratic and the democratic factions were most nearly balanced. I know it is the custom to claim Athens as an instance of a refined democracy; but I put it to the classical reader whether it was the faction of the Piræus—in whose number were Cleon the leather-seller, Eucrates the rope-seller, and Hyperbolus the lamp-maker—or the faction of Alcibiades, which was most adapted to patronise the cultivators of literature. Pericles was, as every one knows, one of their greatest patrons and a great democrat; but in fact he was of the number of the Athenian whigs, who, themselves refined aristocrats, only used the popular sympathies as a weapon against another section of their own order.*

Why were the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the most flourishing period of French literature, but because both of the above conditions were then, and then alone, present? Charles V. made some efforts to create a taste for knowledge and literature in his dominions, partly, no doubt, from a desire to draw away his turbulent nobles from their warlike habits, and enervate them elegantly; for, as D'Alembert remarks, "The cultivation of letters is one of

* On the aristocratic nature of Greek and Roman literature there are some very just remarks in De Tocqueville's *Dem. en Ameri.* iii. 122. "The first fruits which are reaped under a bad system often spring from seed sown under a good one. Thus it was in some measure with the Augustan age. Thus it was with the age of Raphael and Ariosto, of Aldus and Vida."—*Macaulay, Essay on Machiavelli.* And to these may be added the age of Charles V., in which, amid the decline of industry and the loss of liberty, the splendour sown in the age of Ferdinand and Isabella came to bloom.

the most infallible means of securing the tranquillity of a monarchy, for a reason which on the contrary may render them pernicious to republics, because, when pursued too far, there is an attraction belonging to them which absorbs men's attention, and makes them cold to every other object." * Indeed, I ought to have enumerated above, among the means which a monarch can take for reducing the power of the nobles, the introduction of letters and the fine arts. Francis I., actuated more by a real love of letters, made the same endeavour to refine his nobility, but they were still devoted to military glory, and not even the example of the court, powerful as it has been in French history, could immediately recall them from their ancestral pursuits. Montaigne and Amyot were but rough precursors of Malherbe, Corneille, and Racine. So that before the seventeenth century France had scarcely produced a single work upon which its literary fame is in any measure founded, whereas England, whose nobles were less military and more refined, had before that time produced some of the greatest works in our language. But in France the change arrived, though late, and in the time of Louis XIV., the noblesse of France, without having lost its military character, became the most cultivated of Europe. Then both conditions existed: social inequality and refinement in the higher classes; and accordingly, from that time to the middle of the eighteenth century, a refined taste prevailing among the aristocracy called forth from the bourgeois and more ambitious of the noblesse, a class of distinguished men, who, urged by a desire for personal distinction, gave the last classic finish to the language and literature of France. Nowhere, says Burke†, were men of letters so highly esteemed, courted, caressed, and even feared, as in France during the days of its refined aristocracy. The same incentive to distinction for some time remained, but gradually their literature became

* D'Alembert, *Œuvres*, iii. 25.† *Works*, vii. 22.

more practical and utilitarian. The social rise of the commons, who now required and could afford to pay a class of writers on subjects of exact knowledge, tended to derogate from the polish and correctness of the French literature, which was maintained by men who despised the hard and practical knowledge of nature, like Lord Chesterfield, who wrote to his son, "Your reading should be chiefly historical; I do not mean of remote, dark, fabulous history, still less of *jimcrack natural history* of fossils, minerals, plants, &c., but I mean the useful political and constitutional history of Europe for the three last centuries and a half."* On subjects of material knowledge it is seldom possible to write with classic loftiness, nor is it sought to do so. A writer on science depends little on his style, for his successor is sure to eclipse him by right of his scientific advance, and the only enduring result of his achievement will be the fame of having advanced science from the point at which he found it. Thus the first cultivators of a science are left far behind by any new devotee, although his personal merits may be greatly inferior to theirs. But in the fine arts, among which literature may for this purpose be classed, there is not the same progress as in science and the mechanical arts. The first artists in the fine arts have often been the greatest, and the first authors are not necessarily surpassed by their successors †; for to the literary man his style is all in all ‡: he lives in perpetual pursuit of the beau-ideal. Other men may have his thoughts, and better thoughts than his, but unless they can manage to put more of the *venustum*

* Letter ccvi.

† Leonardo da Vinci was, as every one knows, a great painter, but he likewise anticipated many of the discoveries of Galileo, Kepler, Castelli, and the modern geologists and inductive philosophers (see p. 137). Now as the man of science he is surpassed and forgotten; as the artist he lives in the full plenitude of his ancient power.

‡ "Le style c'est l'homme même."—*Buffon, Œuvres, ed. Paris, 1824, i. 160.*

into their expression of the same thoughts there is little chance of their driving him out of the temple of fame. There must be good muscles to the piece, but it is in the grace of the attitude and the drapery that each artist manifests his individuality. For in the belles-lettres the point of emulation is excellence of expression, understanding by that term the arrangement of the ideas, the taste displayed in the method of handling the topics, and the harmony of the language to the subject. These are peculiar to each author. He who performs well this part of his task not only obtains fame among the refined patrons of his own day, but may count on the homage of a late posterity ; ay, of that posterity which while it crushes the efforts of those who might be great artists in its own day, cannot emancipate itself from the fascination of the intellectual heroes of former age. Shakspeare, Fielding, Pope, Bolingbroke, Swift, though they could not live among Americans, are the "great and sceptred sovereigns who rule them from their urns." Thus it is a fact of universal truth, that later writers may steal the matter, may adopt the discoveries, and transport the knowledge of a former writer into their own works, but they cannot steal his style, and in that inalienability of style genius grounds its visions of an immortality on earth.

As the democratic element rose in France, as men of thought emancipated themselves in part from the patronage of the court and the noblesse, as positive and exact knowledge, which only began to be thought of about the year 1718*, gradually claimed more attention and study, so the literary elegance of France declined. This was partly due to a neglect of the classic authors of Greece, of Rome, and of their own nation ; for the scientific turn of mind tends to the disparagement of antiquity. In physical science the later discoverer is always the best ; the older are seldom consulted, except to furnish histories of science, and to

* Martin, *Hist. de Franc.* xvii. 616.

provide the curious with that record of errors which, as a great critic * has remarked, often shortens the road to truth. A feeling thus is generated, that men have got out of antiquity all that is worth having from it; and the mind that throws aside every desire but that of knowing what is, contracts insensibly a contempt for knowing what has been said by earlier inquirers. This is fair and useful enough in the sciences in which there is a natural progress, in which Truth is the daughter of Time, as Crabbe says; but it is the misfortune of a strong national addiction to progressive pursuits that this contempt of antiquity is carried into matters where, in despising the past, we are often despising the superior.

In 1750, D'Alembert † observed this spirit spreading in France. As it led to an advance in science he commended it; as it derogated from the study of the ancient belles-lettres he deplored it; and in his own eloquent and acute manner he traced how, at that time, France had come to produce more principles for facilitating a right judgment on things, a larger circle of thoughtful men, and yet fewer good works. And he said, that as the age of Demetrius succeeded immediately that of Demosthenes, the age of Lucan and Seneca that of Cicero and Virgil; so the age in which he wrote had, by similar steps, succeeded and afforded a similar contrast to that of Louis XIV.

And if this material turn of mind in the end destroyed the belles-lettres of France, much more has it, and will it, exercise a destructive influence over the literature of other countries: for as good sometimes comes out of evil, the undue retention of the aristocratic power produced a salutary effect on the scientific literature of France, for their men of mathematics were likewise men of letters. In the leisure and freedom of the Academy, they worked out their harsh problems, and discovered their dry laws

* Sir J. Reynolds, Discourses, i. 24.

† D'Alembert, Œuvres, i. 285, 291.

of nature ; but the refined and fastidious patrons whom they, with happier fortune than men of science in general, addressed at the assemblies of that Academy, forbade them to despise the culture of those authors who had excelled in grace of expression. To that influence of a refined aristocracy over men of science it was owing that Buffon, D'Alembert, and the great men who clustered round them, gifted alike with a brilliant imagination and a penetrating power of analysis, sought to express their new ideas in the old classic language of their country ; and the tone thus given to French science remained even to our day, for Arago has not long departed.

Sparta had no native literature. It had social inequality ; but the strict institutions and the exclusive feelings of the higher race, however much they might have enjoyed literary compositions, prevented them from permitting any member of the subject race to rise to a social equality with them through his literary efforts. The inducement which social inequality usually affords to the author was there withheld. The great composer of their war songs—Tyrtæus—was an Athenian ; and the only literature which appears to have circulated in Sparta was that brought by the wandering poets and philosophers of other parts of Greece, who generally took Sparta in their tour.* It would seem also that the Spartans cared principally, if not entirely, for that kind of literature which is most harmonious to a military aristocracy,—war-songs, and the praises of warlike ancestors ; nor is there reason to suppose that there was among them sufficient refinement to raise a native literature, even if their treatment of the subject race had permitted authors to spring from it.

Norway has no literature. There is no social inequality, and nothing is to be gained by intellectual labour.† In countries not only without an aristocracy,

* Müller's *Literature of Ancient Greece*, pp. 110, 275.

† Laing's *Norway*, p. 383.

but remarkable for their objection to such an institution, and where utility, the principle of commercial republics, is dominant, poets, elegant historians, and all those races of authors, drawn out of the Homeric root, are considered idle ; and "knowledge for the people," which we all know needs small literary ornament, is thought, or at least is treated, as the only worthy object of encouragement. Systematic accumulation of facts is what readers in such countries desire. On the other hand, refined nobilities regard poets and authors as ministers to their elegant luxury ; while the respect which they cannot but feel for genius accords to authors a higher position than is attained by other caterers to the tastes of patrician virtuosi.

But is science the legitimate offspring of democracies ? The great democracy of our days shows no irresistible adaptation for the theoretical observation of natural phenomena. M. de Tocqueville explains the absence of science by the want of that leisure which is necessary for meditation*, and says that there is no place less fitted for meditation than the interior of a democratic society. Although it is I think indisputable that in constitutional or quasi-constitutional countries the useful sciences are connected with the democratic element, and advance in proportion as it rises, it yet seems, from the instances of America, Holland, Carthage, and Venice, that commercial countries living under a pure democracy, or plutocracy, however much devoted to the practice of mechanical arts and the use of machines discovered by scientific men of other countries, are themselves far from favourable to the development of theoretical science ; and the true view seems to be that high theoretical science is best advanced by men of humble origin, in times when the democracy of a state is beginning to wrestle to some effect with the old elements of aristocracy and monarchy.

* Dem. en Am. iii. 81.

There is then in the state plenty of energy applied to matters of utility, but there is not that excessive and exclusive devotion to utility and that absence of repose which characterise commercial democracies. Some of our greatest names in science, Robert Boyle, Harvey, Wren, Wallis and Newton, thought and wrote while England was still mainly aristocratical. But they belonged to the order of the commons, Boyle alone having any distinction of birth; and from the court rather than from the nobles came whatever patronage they received, for monarchs easily perceive that it redounds to the glory of their kingdoms to contain men of science: but a refined nobleman prefers to lead in his train an elegant poet, or a beautiful essayist, than to have his table haunted by an anatomist or a geometrician; the former appearing to be more than half, and the latter a complete savage.

It is true, both in science and in literature, that the bustle and hurry of a town life, and a constant discomposure to which the mind is there subjected, obscure and choke the higher efforts of those who are by nature and by early culture fit for lofty thought. Often we have found the greatest philosophers among men of business; but then they kept their philosophy for their country seats, and their business for the town. Lord Bacon has expressed what every one of them must have felt when he wrote: "And now because I am in the country, I will send you some of my country fruits, which with me are great meditations; when I am in the city they are choked with business." I believe that a certain amount of nauseous and fatiguing work facilitates the powers of the imagination in the more limited time when they are used. Lord Byron*, under no necessity of exercising his mind

* "By way of divertisement, I am studying daily, at an Armenian monastery, the Armenian language. I found that my mind wanted something craggy to break upon; and this—as the most difficult thing I could discover here for an amusement—I have chosen, to torture me into attention."—1816. *Memoirs*, iii. 312.

on anything but what directly served his pleasure or his ambition, taught himself the Armenian language, for the purpose of employing the qualities of his mind, other than imagination, and so relieving himself from the desultory wayward course which those pursue with how much of feebleness who are always exercising their imaginative powers. If you have dammed up a stream it will flow for a while with more potent current when the dam is removed, and it will break more vigorously over the craggy rocks you may interpose in its course than if it had been allowed to trickle on unmolested ; and so the country imaginings of a man whose mind is choked and obstructed in the town, are finer and more powerful, and bound with a greater vigour, than if he exhausted his inventive force as fast as it was generated.

But the preoccupation of the mind by business may be so great as not healthily to check but wholly to choke any inventive power, as too many commercial states have by their barrenness of high thought made sadly manifest. Indeed, those men who have attuned their minds by business, for following better the greater pursuits of their leisure, have been almost without exception, members of what are called the liberal professions, and not merchants: the reason of this being that in the former, the years of youth are years of leisure, in which the seeds of great thoughts and great enterprises may be sown, though they bear no fruit till the years of business and city toil ; while in the latter, the counting-house succeeds to the school ; when they are first taught to think, it is to think only upon business. And this is a fact connected with the mortality of retired small tradesmen. The large dealer retires to his country estate, and employs himself in superintending it, in building a mansion and laying out a park, and otherwise tastefully and laboriously ruining himself. This at least saves him from immediate death, but the small dealer buys an annuity and a villa, and after a few years dies of simple ennui. Both are incapable

of using aright the ease that they have earned. It is only the man of liberal and largely educated mind, that can throw off his business and be happy in the thoughtful leisure of the country.

Now, America does not present to the statesman who believes literature to be an element of national greatness any very cheering spectacle. Apologists for the total deficiency of literature in America, say that they have no need there of great savans, skilful artists, or instructive writers, when they can obtain the works of all in their own language from England; but I would rather refer this phenomenon to the operation of general principles which one may trace in a modified action elsewhere. Literature is the pursuit of adventurers in an age when there is not much adventure in the country. It is the way to rise to the higher ranks, but there must be higher ranks to rise into, otherwise there may be a combination of leisure and absence of commerce, as is the case in Norway, and yet, for want of stimulus, no literature. But when the age becomes entirely devoted to adventure, commerce supplies quicker ways, not, indeed, of rising to eminence, for that is no longer sought, but of rising to wealth. It was when England was entering on its adventurous age, that the United States broke off from it. They had no aristocracy to rise into by literature or the liberal professions, and so the unalloyed spirit of trading seized them completely.

Now, the great objects in commerce are to adapt the supply to the demand, and to provide the worst article for the most money; these when applied to literature, are fatal to every excellence. First, because no author writes anything of permanent value, except when urged by that fierce desire which every man feels when he has a great or a new idea to express it: a fact which accounts for the worthlessness of prize essays and all other compositions, where the author does not choose his own subject, for the chances are infinitely small that the

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examiner should hit upon the subject which the candidate had previously made his own. Secondly, because the demand is for information, not for elegance or style, either in the arrangement of the thoughts or of the words. These are in honour when they appear, but the encouragement is not sufficient to make them appear often. The demand in a matter-of-fact commercial country is for a mass of statistics and a few shallow thoughts, that the multitude may comprehend and repeat without trouble, and need not, like Sheridan's gipsies, disguise them, in order to make them pass for their own. The age in which he lives should, in some respect, inspire the thoughts of every man who aims at an intellectual eminence, but in great instances it rather presents to him involuntarily the difficulties which are then rampant, and the problems that have to be solved. To advance to clearer ground is his object, and sometimes, as was the case with the two Bacons, the man of genius has advanced too far for his contemporaries to follow him, and has to appeal for his due fame to that posterity which will slowly overtake him. This is very different from the man who promises before a certain day in the calendar to sit down and think upon a subject, merely because the age wants to have a few thoughts about it to retail. It may be a great genius who begins in this way, but he will not be a great genius long.

Great thinkers and eminent men of all descriptions, except the military and the scientific, are ceasing to be evoked in France, for the very reasons that they have ever been latent in America ;—the degradation of the national taste and the envy of superiority. Eugene Sue, the two Dumas', and a crowd of clever men, of whom they may be taken as the representatives, would, it may be naturally supposed, if they had lived in the great days of France, have achieved a reputation like that of Corneille, Boileau, Racine, and Molière ; but now they write for an age where languid sensibility can be brought into action

only by strong stimulants that would disgust finer minds, and the vulgar coarseness and cheap sensuality of modern life in France, must be represented, however unwillingly, by the novelist who desires to be read. These modern French novels are the models of the only kind of literature that can be called purely American. Their life supplies them with similar incidents; their jaded sensibilities require the same coarse stimulants. Those simple incidents which have a poignancy and are of deep interest to persons who live an inartificial and virtuous life are insipid to those who are versed in the romance of vice. It is said that the later ages are more refined than the earlier ages of a nation. Perhaps so, if artificial refinement alone is meant, but tenderness of sentiment and innocence, which are essential to true mental refinement, are to be found in the earlier ages, not in ages and nations so versed in hardening sensuality as the French and the Americans are now.

Again, grandeur and nobility of style are two of the finest attributes of a national literature in its period of greatest activity and correctness. . Minds, says Marmontel*, formed amid war and the lofty character of a military noblesse, ought naturally to have a fashion of expressing themselves derived from the elevation of their thoughts. Mean and sordid objects are not so familiar to them that the terms which represent such objects have a necessary place in their language. This is why Homer is the noblest of writers, and in proportion to the high character and influence of the noblesse is the loftiness of tone in literature. How can an author's thoughts be noble when everyone about him is talking of dollars? The only method for an author living in such a society as that of the United States to soar above it is to make himself a recluse, and live in his library filled with the loftiest writers of aristocratic Greece,

* Œuvres, xiv. 351.

Rome, modern Italy, France, and England; but if he does so he produces a book which in America is an exotic. In great literatures the language is lofty, because the ideas are lofty, and great writers like Corneille, and still more Racine, know when to soar and when to descend to the familiar. A total absence of the feelings and thoughts which inspire nobility of expression, and a belief that it consists in high-flown phrases which may be used to varnish over mean ideas, are among the causes of American bombast.

This fault of German writers to soar too often is near akin to one of the cardinal points of distinction between Homer and Virgil. Homer accommodates his diction to his subject, skipping over slight things and elaborating only high and noble subjects. Virgil, on the contrary, tries to infuse grandeur into matters naturally paltry, so that, as some one has said, he throws about the dung like a hero. His good taste has kept him just without the boundary of bombast, but this equal elevation of style in all matters alike, if it does not deviate from true taste, at least produces a monotony which to me has the same unpleasing effect as if the poet had taken a preliminary survey of his field like an engineer, and built viaducts over his valleys, and driven tunnels through the loftiest elevations, for he is shy of soaring to Homer's heights as he is of descending to speak of common things in a common way. The American fine writers omit the tunnelling operation altogether, and build their viaducts with triple tiers of rhetoric, to bridge over from mountain-top to mountain-top. Hence when we want to pass through some homely valley of thought, where Homer would have led us in a natural easy way, in pleasant contrast to his lofty flights we can only cross it, if our guide is an American of the aspiring order, by ascending to the highest level, whence he stretches across his rope from peak to peak, and dances upon it like a rope dancer at a fair, attracting the flagging attention of his readers by his wild sommersault antics, till he ceases to

be a literary artist, and becomes a literary mountebank. There are English authors of the day who pursue the same course and with the same result; for, not addressing select or fastidious circles, they set up their show at the street corner, and collect as large a crowd of readers as they can by the novelty and strangeness of their antics.

Pretension and vulgarity are almost convertible terms, at least it is certain that all pretension is vulgarity. A vulgar woman in society always marks herself by her pretension—thrusting forward the greatness of her connections, the talent of her son, the wealth or achievements of her husband, the rank of her guests, the *éclat* of her parties. A vulgar painter invests the most simple and ordinary subjects with an air of mock grandeur, he can paint nothing naturally, but every object on his canvas claims two or three degrees of admiration more than our natural feelings tell us it is by right entitled to. In the same manner pretends the vulgar author, though his sin is not always his own fault, for who can help being vulgar if he lives among a nation where all being politically equal each is vulgarly pretending to be a peg or two above the dreary level, and as a part of this miserable deception often affects the show of luxury without its reality. For rather than abide in moderate independence they will make themselves poor in order to be thought rich. The universal affection of stilted fine-writing is, therefore, a result fairly deducible from the equal democratic condition of America; but its plutocratic element tends the same way. Plutocracies delight in splendour, pomp, and show, and gratify that delight without much regard for the finer rules of taste; in truth, one may say in total disregard of them, for true taste, abhors this vulgar ostentation. Their authors, like their painters, following this vice, fatigue with their unceasing florid eloquence and the tinsel richness of their colouring. Lucan, Statius, and Claudian, who wrote for the splendid plutocracy of Rome, when the old Roman aristocratic character was gone, are the standard examples of the style of continued

exaggeration, perpetual gorgeousness, beset by a fury for novelty*, all of course destitute of that repose and simplicity which are necessary to true grandeur, but which in such an age would be thought dull and tame.

Again the authors are bad, because the essence of literary ambition is to attain an intellectual supremacy, and it thrives only in a society where those who are lofty by birth feel a noble emulation to be the patrons of merit. In America there are no such patrons: the society of that country does not court literary ability, and intellectual supremacy itself, like every other kind of supremacy, is the object of a moral ostracism. Genius is by its very nature eccentric, and with those who place their boast in equality eccentricity is a matter of reproach. They fear singularity rather than error; for among a people all educated up to mediocrity, few can escape the ridicule of deficiency or the envy of eminence.

It is true that in America the very highest and most indisputable intellectual eminence is in honour, but men do not attain the highest point at once, and therefore unless eminence generally is in honour, the crop out of which the highest eminence grows will not be sown. The consequence is that the "lions" of America are foreigners. They have struggled to rise in their own country, where eminence of every degree is in honour, and have succeeded in attaining a very high degree of it. They then go to America and receive an ovation, but in America itself they never would have been bred.

Germany has laboured under a singular disadvantage: it has had both social inequality and a general refinement of taste and manners, but unhappily not at the same time. While the Italian noblesse were living in city palaces devoted to all the arts of luxurious elegance, the German nobles were either engaged in war or lived in their isolated castles with no more mental culture than was required for

* See Hume, *Essay of Simplicity and Refinement*.

the command of a troop, or the rude offices of chieftainship at home. Before the necessary refinement was introduced among these nobles to transform them into connoisseurs and patrons of literature, their power and importance were almost destroyed by the same Frederic the Great, who, though he exacted correctness and elegance from the French members of his Berlin Academy, favoured every native growth, however worthless, and thus succeeded only in raising up a trade of writing ; and all the subsequent encouragement that has been given by kings and official persons in Germany has effected nothing but the creation of a crowd of savans, more adapted to the patient study of the cloister than to the flights of genius. The multiplication of universities and schools in Germany, which were frequently undertaken or encouraged by the smaller potentates in the way of commercial enterprise, in order to fill their town with tax-payers, academised all German talent, and however conducive these institutions may be to philological learning and the study of antiquities, they are far less favourable to works of imagination and genius than a class of gay and wealthy connoisseurs, for the latter are shrewd and unsparing critics, intolerant of pedantry, dulness, and moody sentimentalism, who lavish their favours on the wittiest, most original, and most eloquent writers, whereas universities foster any literary growth, and in them the weeds often choke the flowers. It was a fortunate thing that the schoolmen of the middle ages stuck to Latin, and were content with barbarising and debasing an already effete language. If they had thought fit to pollute the languages of their own countries with their pedantic and crabbed jargon, I know not whether it would have been in the power of all the later wits to lick those languages into shape. In Germany the old academic pedantry continued later than in any other country, and after the Reformation, when other nations were beginning to feel that they had a language of their own, susceptible of culture, the Germans remembered only that they had a language to put

it to vile uses. Like their neighbours, they left off speaking Latin; but unlike them, they did not leave off speaking scholastic barbarism; and their language itself has been, in consequence of this professional domination, so adulterated with Latin forms as to be unintelligible to the common people, who speak the old pure German, now called low German. If, says Denina*, you merely regard the number of books printed in the twenty-four years between the peace of Hubertsbourg and the death of the Emperor Frederic II. you would say that neither in Italy, in the age of Leo X., nor in France, in that of Louis XIV. had letters been more flourishing. "Mais nous," adds he, "ne dissimulerons pas qu'il est pour le moins aussi problématique, si cette liberté, ces moyens aisés de faire imprimer cette foule prodigieuse de livres qui sortent des presses d'Allemagne, est utile à la perfection de la littérature, qu'il est douteux, si l'extrême facilité de l'instruction forme les génies et les grands auteurs." Mirabeau† puts the matter in a more complimentary way, observing that elsewhere the works of imagination have preceded those of the judgment, but in Germany they had the fruits without the flowers. In fact, the Homeric element of literature in Germany has had but few successful cultivators, and seems, like the aristocracy which should have supported it, to have died early away. The Hesiodic, on the contrary, comprises nearly all German literature. That country never yet has had an Augustan age of literature, or a real constitutional government; and I doubt whether it ever will have either; for of making books there is no end in Germany, and books when they multiply, particularly if they are full of academic criticism, destroy the fine and natural flow of poetry‡.

* La Prusse Littéraire, i. 66. † Monarch. Pruss. iii. 537.

‡ In Germany the poet is the creature of the critic. Lessing, Schiller, and Klopstock, began by learning the rules of criticism, and then proceeded to write in accordance with them. Their Pegasus trots

the majestic, untaught eloquence that many a warrior race, innocent of reading or writing, like that which fought before Troy, and that which once dwelt in our Scottish Highlands, has possessed, by reason of their high feeling, in a degree of beauty that might have put to shame the genius of a more cultivated age. A national literature generally loses the vigour of its constitution in a diarrhoea of books, more than half of them being commentaries on other books, and I know no prescription that can restore it.*

The fate of Frederic's attempt, the equal failure of Francis I., of Christina of Sweden, of Alexander the Great, of Catherine of Russia, teach the same lesson with regard to literature that every page of history inculcates on those who would transplant other social characteristics. Constitutions will not succeed unless they meet with the forces in the nation required to work them. Commerce enters not a nation by a royal road, nor can the will of an absolute sovereign evoke one literary spark from a country where the noblesse is not refined, and the commons aspiring. But though Frederic could not force the plant to bloom, he made it run quick to seed, and by his meddling he has undone German literature.†

It is a curious mark of declining literature this spirit of commenting and writing literary histories ; and yet it is a constant one. In Greece, from the days of Dionysius, in Rome under the later empire, in Italy after the middle

tamely in this prosaic harness — Goethe alone, though not entirely, freed himself from allegiance to the critics. See Lewes's *Life of Goethe*, i. 172.

* Menzel says that according to a moderate calculation, ten millions of volumes are printed every year in Germany. — *Foreign Q. R.* xvi. 9.

† I speak only of the literature of Prussia and other parts of Germany which are under its influence and partake its civilisation. Hungary, Poland, Croatia, have yet to vindicate their independence and create a literature of their own. The Polish mind has already, in the verses of Mickiewicz, given ground for high hopes of its poetical powers.

of the fifteenth century *, in France after Voltaire and Vauvenargues†, authors came to write not so much of things and of ideas as of authors, and as Goldsmith says‡, “seemed to think there was more merit in praising or censuring well than in writing well;” so that literature, whose high prerogative it is to ennoble and guide present affairs by bringing the best lessons and examples of the past to bear upon later times, to afford counsel for the statesman and consolation and rule for the Christian in all the altered states of life, apt encouragement for the aspiring, apt rebuke for the depraved, to diffuse among the ignorant and those who will not advance by their own unaided energies, the new speculations of the learned and the wise, clothed in the garb of taste and beauty, and to enable the distant and the unknown to meet in ideas and sentiments at the banquet of thought, and from their distant studies to hold conference and correspondence with all the world : literature, abandons these high duties, and dies a dotard talking of itself.

Venice, perhaps, may arise in some minds as a witness against the leading portion of this chapter. There was a refined noblesse, but there were no belles-lettres. The fallacy lies in the double meaning of the word noblesse. In Venice there was not a true social inequality. The power of the plutocracy rested solely in the assembly of their order, and the members of that order individually possessed no privilege or recognised power that did not belong to the meanest citizen. Anxiously was it guarded that they should not. The nobility were not of the feudal type; they had no lands, no castles, no vassals, and were devoured by a perpetual jealousy of each other.

* See on the commentaries of Italian authors on their predecessors, Prescott Misc. p. 542. The number of commentators on Petrarch and Dante is incredible.

† See the observations of M. Villemain, himself a great example of the commentatorial turn of mind (Cours de Litt. Fr. xviii^{ème} Siècle, i. 30).

‡ Present State of Polite Learning, ch. iv.

Their council chamber opened to no keys but those of wealth and intrigue, their palazzos harboured no ambitious adventurers, to whom the nobles would have been not patrons but rivals ; their fear instead of their generosity was excited by a candidate for personal distinction. Into such an order no man would try to rise by devoting himself to the elegant arts of literature, or the more solid works of thought. Nobody dared to soar above mediocrity in any of the high walks of merit, and talent expended itself harmlessly in painting Madonnas, in adorning churches, designing palazzos, and commenting upon the text of the classics ; but where exalted intellect was a fault, we need not wonder at the total absence of that *génie philosophique* which, as D'Alembert* says, marks the instant of greatest national enlightenment. The first essay would have put a free inquirer into the list of suspected citizens, and the second would have entitled him to a passage across the Ponte de' i Sospiri. One effect of a government so crushing to truth is shown by the poverty and the mendacity of the native historians who all write in the hope of being historiographer-public and under the fear of being a corpse. Not a single orator worth the name ever addressed a Venetian public, and it is said that the Venetian clergy preached even duller sermons than the cloth in other countries, for fear of saying anything but innocuous truisms. The poets, such as they were, either sung in Latin strains, to the tunes set by Martial and Statius (except one unfortunate Lelio Cosmico, who being too free with his Latin came before the holy tribunal), or indulged in translations from the Latin and Greek. The works of genius composed in other quarters of Italy were printed in unimpeachable type at Venice, but their number was not swelled by the labour of any Venetian citizen. Altogether the absence of great genius in Venetian art and learning affords a

* Œuvres, iii. 28.

strong confirmation of the remark that, in a plutocracy, as in a commercial democracy, there are no great and illustrious men, but a good array of mediocrities. There are a few great painters and many persons of respectable fame in the humbler practical departments of literature and even science, but the mighty and thoughtful men for whom Italy is honoured, breathed another atmosphere than that of Il Broglio.*

With Tuscany the case is altogether different. There was at the commencement of national existence a powerful aristocracy, possessing lands, castles, and vassals. They gave way to refinement much sooner than the English, French, or German nobles, though their families were founded about the same time. They came to live in cities, and filled their palaces with all the appliances of gorgeous refinement, but their power, like that of the Eupatridæ of Athens, was gradually subverted by the increasing importance of the commons, and their offspring the plutocracy. There was no monarch to control the contests of the two factions; so that, precisely in the same way as in Athens and republican Rome, the period which might have been constitutional was passed in the alternate triumphs of these two factions. The plebeians were, as in the other instances, led by some wealthy families, who very much resembled, as far as political conduct goes, the party of Pericles and Ephialtes and the likeness between Pericles and Lorenzo both in respect of their political position, and in their encouragement of all that could embellish and refine human nature, is too striking to have escaped the most careless observer.†

* On the trading nature of a great part of Dutch literature, see *Voltaire, Œuvres*, xxviii. 243. 255.

† The author of the "Historical Parallels" (1831. i. 186), compares Lorenzo and Peisistratus, who was in fact the forerunner of Pericles, and like him distinguished for an elegant taste and love of literature, but Athenian civilisation more nearly resembled the Florentine of the time of the Medici when Pericles was in power.

They both belonged to that class of uncrowned princes, who, as Sismondi * remarks, receive the name *Magnificent*, when they have no other title. Literature in both cases found a social inequality and a refined aristocracy willing to patronize it, and admit its best votaries into their society. The civil contests of the great Florentine houses called forth the mental energy of those aristocrats and their thoughtful suite. Machiavelli somewhere notes how this intellectual activity, which in fact produced the literature of Tuscany, was called into being by the domestic rivalry of Florentine society. Florence was then in its constitutional stage, it had a turbulent and refined aristocracy, who thus aroused its literary glory. Later, when it became plutocratic, and when the Medici enslaved it, literature was more diffused and more talked about, but the creations of genius were stifled.

Cosmo I. encouraged the wars of criticism, that he might prevent the wars of liberty. The posterity of the noble houses which had once fought for noble political principles now ranged themselves with the Academy of Florence on the side of Petrarch, or went to the Academy Della Crusca, to discuss the beauties of the *Gierusalemme Liberata*.† And thus the energies of genius were exhausted in verbal criticism. Never in such ages arise the princes of thought, for liberty of speech is the only atmosphere which they can breathe. There is no such utter freedom of thought and speech at any time in national progress as when rival aristocratic parties—their leaders almost sovereigns—are contending for the highest political power, not merely by the aid of arms, but also by the attacks of the pen. The potentates and their adherents will dare and say anything;—and this is another reason for deeming the literature of a country the contribution of its aristocracy.

The peculiar characteristics and defects of Spanish,

* *Repub. Ital.*, ix. 187.

† *Hallam Literature Europ.* ii. 424.

Portuguese, Swedish and Danish literature, will, I think, receive their true explanation by reference to the same principles by which the literary development of other countries has been regulated, and all, I think, establish the position *that a classic and correct literature is produced by the effect of a refined aristocracy upon enterprising and ambitious commoners.*

The longer the constitutional stage of a nation's life is prolonged, the slower is the transition from the preceding to the future stages; and the consequences of the continued strife between the political elements make themselves manifest in literature. In the reign of Queen Anne our literature was purely aristocratical, and literary men (saving always those of Grub Street) had all the characteristics of members of a profession. Although they lived by their writings, it was a desire for fame and social distinction that led them to adopt that means of procuring a livelihood. Some of our authors still write for fame, and still address an audience scrupulously correct in taste and aristocratical in feeling: others abandon the pain of incessant correction, and a refined self-education, for the unfamed affluence of speedy, slipshod voluminous writing, whose authors seldom publish a name, and still less frequently earn one; and our literature, like all the rest of our civilisation, shows the conciliation of the two distinct types, for we have both a profession and a trade of literature. The extremes are easy enough to be distinguished; but the boundary line it is difficult to draw.

There is no greater fallacy now current than that implied in the complaints respecting the position of literary men in English society. Those who belong to the profession are as much courted and respected among the higher circles as they ever were. Macaulay, Mill, Hallam, Grote, Tennyson, Trench, who may be supposed to write from a love of literature, and because they have something to say, attest this: but the tradesmen of literature are treated as other tradesmen, not because there is

anything disgraceful in being a tradesman, but because his *morale* and tone of mind is frequently not that of a gentleman ; and so periodical critics and newspaper rhetoricians are treated with suspicion. If found gentlemen, they are encouraged and admitted to good society ; but there is a doubt which must first be dispelled. It is only those who have not succeeded in dispelling the doubt with regard to themselves that complain of the ill-treatment of men of letters by modern society.

In an age of much writing and reading there is less show of distinguished talent, and more dispersion of its fruits among the rich growth of weeds ; but take it all in all, there is sometimes more fruit. If there is no false standard of taste to lead men away, their writings, however hurried and diffuse, will contain many thoughts of truth and grandeur, many passages of faultless splendour. At this day we have no one author whom we could rank in the same hall of the temple of fame with Bacon or Newton, with Swift or Milton ; but let us take all the wit, the ingenuity, the wisdom, the eloquence of the age, and do as the ancients did with their old legislators, attribute all of it to two or three imaginary persons, or two or three of the most eminent of the age, and then England in its nineteenth century would have as proud representatives at the court of posterity as the England of any previous century.

But it should ever be remembered that a fine and original literature is the effect and not the cause of the moral grandeur of the nation. As the greatest inventors and authors are not generally those who are most fond of books, so the nation most overrun with books, and where there is most reading, is not necessarily the nation that can create or continue a literature worthy of immortal fame. Reading was a much more common pursuit in Florence after its enslavement than in its earlier days of greatness. So now in Denmark, Sweden, Prussia, and in the United States of America, all of them barren

in great offspring, there is much more reading than in ages and in countries which have produced illustrious works. For reading is one of the common pastimes of idle plutocracies and otiose peasants; reading often without thought, and without any inducement urging them to add any but the trumpiest viands to the banquet of which they partake. They read because they live in towns or snug hamlets with nothing else to do; with no country sports, no estates to manage (for if they have estates they leave them to their bailiffs), no politics to engage them, for politics they leave to the functionary of government. They read because the occupation of part of their time provides them with enough to live on, and their spare hours are better employed in reading than in riotous or vicious amusements. Such reading leads to little fruit; and though they make acquaintance with the master minds of other ages, and honour them often with enthusiasm, they fail to catch the spark. It is not an idle love of literature that makes a great author; there must be some more active instigation urging him on. For great works are produced only in ages of great individual toil, and on the eve of great social movements. Now, in aristocratic ages, mere love of money may, in some few instances, be the instigator; but as wealth can be acquired in greater degree, and with more ease, in almost any other occupation, wealth does not deserve to be called the main object to men of real literary genius. Their great inducement, beyond the pleasure of intellectual creation, is the love of being praised by those whose esteem they value, or whose society and acquaintance they covet.

"Honos alit artes omnesque incenduntur ad studia gloriâ."

When there are no longer such persons in a state to afford this incentive, or when their society, and even an equality with them, may be attained by quicker and less laborious means, men may continue to write, but it will be for money only; and they will not labour so hard and so

fastidiously as long to maintain any high standard of excellence : the spirit of exact literary taste has fled,

“ And hearts that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more.”

After that writing becomes a trade. Now, I anticipate that this explanation of literary inducement to excellence may be accused of reducing the inspiration of literary men to what is called at college tuft-hunting. But, remember, who are those that in the age when literature first bursts forth are the wearers of tufts. They are the only persons who then possess a refined and elegant taste. All below them are coarse and rude, no fit auditors for literature. “ I had rather,” says Milton, whom no one will accuse of tuft-hunting, “ since the life of men is likened to a scene, that all my entrances and exits might mix with such persons only whose worth erects them and their actions to a grave and tragic deportment, and not to have to do with clowns and vices.” * The noblesse represent great mansions where the author would be saved from starvation ; they represent rich subscribers who would enable him to live with the happy delusion of earning his bread ; they represent graceful and admiring hosts, within whose orbits alone sparkle the wit and elegant learning of the age, and who themselves not seldom cultivate the art of literature with success, and often in their proud rivalries they call in aid the boldness and genius of the authors attached to their interest. It was a noble ambition of the feudal potentates laying aside their armed retainers and their princely bands of pursuivants, rather to glory in the number and the genius of the thoughtful men whom their munificence provided with literary leisure, their applause stimulated to great exertions, their emulation encouraged and ennobled.

At the dawn of national existence the rays of the rising sun reach only the lofty warrior chieftains. Looking

* Colasterion, Prose Works, i. 339. ²

back upon those ages we can see none but these exalted personages ;—below them nothing but an obscure, ignoble crowd :—and as the day advances and the meridian is approached, the field illumined is indeed wider, but these warriors and their descendants still stand forth in the most solemn and imposing lights as commanding as ever, and fascinate the eyes of the beholder till he can look only upon them, and the men who circle round them, to partake and to reflect the sheen of intellectual as well as social glory.

We are apt, when we open the books of the 16th and 17th centuries, now the classics of England, to scoff at the noble name which is prefixed, to pity the servility that it pleases us to discover in the glowing dedication, and to think it a little compliment to be called *My Best Patron* by an immortal author. But however meanly we may sometimes think of the author's independence, let us beware of despising the patron. Had not Thomas, Earl of Pembroke and Lord Shaftesbury rescued Locke, where had been the *Essay on the Human Understanding*? Had not the Duke of Buckingham lodged Cowley in his farm at Chertsey, would there not have been one star less in our horizon? How much does Hobbes owe to Cavendish, Bacon to Essex, Butler to the Earl of Dorset, Milton to the Earl of Bridgewater, Congreve to Montagu, Spenser to Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Leicester and Lord Grey, Selden to the Earl and Countess of Kent, Ben Jonson to the Earl of Newcastle, Gay to the Duke and Duchess of Queensborough? Let these and many questions like them, not merely in English but in French and Italian history, be answered before the patrons are condemned.

For my own part, I never wander through the painted galleries of their ancient mansions,—replete with the tattered trophies of war, the magnificent records of great achievements in peace, the long line of ancestral effigies, the armour-hung corridors, their memorial chambers, their historic boudoirs,—without thinking that the greatest

glory of them all are the turret-chamber and the terrace-walk, where, by the munificence of noble patrons, was passed the not slothful leisure, while in the masque and revel triumphed the honoured wit of those illustrious thinkers, who, unassisted, had left England with but half a literature.

Let us remember, therefore, this difference between the social life of the last two centuries and our own, and we shall not then commit to a common contempt the classics of England, and those *littérateurs* who in a later age, when other classes besides aristocrats are educated and refined, should haunt the portals of the aristocracy, and, like that most despicable of flunkies, Theodore Hook, take every opportunity of throwing contumely on the middle class, from which they rose.

Though it were somewhat ungracious, still it is but just to consider the figure which a literary man in those ages presented when contemplated through the long vista that separated the aristocracy from the obscure learned. I suspect that he who looked from the noble end—not being impressed with any of the modern ideas about the “leaders of thought,” and the “progress of civilisation,” and the perfectability of the species in general, imagined that he saw at the other end a professional performer in a creditable and elegant art; and I call Selden to witness, a man whose position enabled him to sympathise with both patron and author: “’Tis ridiculous for a lord to print verses; ’tis well enough to make them to please himself, but to make them public is foolish. If a man in a private chamber twirls his band-strings or plays with a rush to please himself, ’tis well enough; but if he should go into Fleet Street, and sit upon a stall, and twirl a band-string or play with a rush, then all the boys in the street would laugh at him.”* And Congreve, who wished to shine at both ends of the vista, to be at

* Selden’s Table Talk; tit. Poetry.

once a man of fashion and a distinguished author, passed his life in conflict between these two incompatible impulses. When he had written his "Old Bachelor," which was acted in 1693, he was "divided between pride and shame—pride at having written a good play, and shame at having done an ungentlemanlike thing; pretended that he had merely scribbled a few scenes for his own amusement, and affected to yield unwillingly to the importunities of those who pressed him to try his fortune on the stage." * "I wrote the Old Bachelor," says Congreve, "to amuse myself in a slow recovery in a fit of sickness."

As in the progress of society the vista diminished in length, the two characters could better combine; and in the time of Pope, when literature was beginning to emerge from patronage (for he was the first poet who lived by the mere sale of his writings) the nobles had begun to affect talent, and the practice then became common of publishing by subscription; so that at the same time the aristocrats became themselves authors, and the plebeian authors became independent of any one particular patron, though still for many years they filled their subscription lists with noble names. The transition was gradual to a list full of untitled subscribers, and from that to no list at all, but the chance custom of any one who had money enough to buy the book.

This however makes no difference in the character of literary men so long as social position and the society of the great are their ambition. Swift, who, after the death of Sir W. Temple, was as independent of any patron as an author could well be, frankly states in a letter to Lord Bolingbroke, his inducement to become literary; "All my endeavours to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts; whether right or wrong, is no great matter. And so the repu-

* Ed. Rev. vol. lxxii. p. 515.

tation of wit and great learning does the office of a blue riband or a coach and six." In short, Swift's ambition was to make himself an aristocrat by literature. When the aristocracy declines, and some other object, such as mere possession of money, is the inducement of the literary man, then the character of literature, as I have said, alters; but, in fact, by that time the literature of a country, if it is to have one at all, has been created.

CHAP. X.

THE NATIONAL ACME.—THE HARMONY BETWEEN FORMS OF
LITERATURE AND THE STAGES OF NATIONAL PROGRESS.

BEFORE I part from the subject of the place of literature in national progress, I am desirous to make some distinctions, which may prevent a misapprehension of the proposition which I sought to establish in the preceding chapter. And therefore I would call attention to the fact, that the national acme is the period when various kinds of literature flourish for more subtle and particular reasons than those which I have hitherto adduced, to account for the general prosperity of literature at that period. To go through these in detail would lead us too far from the grand central track which in this study we have to traverse, but one or two may be here usefully mentioned.

Tragedy flourishes as the acme approaches, because there is then, and then only, sufficient liberty to indulge in representations of the misfortunes of the great, a subject alien to the aristocratic feelings of an earlier age*, but the representation is one not wholly hostile, but rather sympathetic, and thus addresses the very classes whose misfortunes are represented, and who have only at that period become sufficiently refined to enjoy the representation. Tragedy in its origin is the general

* Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, i. 218. On tragedy dying out of France in the 18th century, see *Villemain, Cours de Lit. Fr., 18me siècle*, i. 67.

representation of beings far raised above the spectators, either by their divine nature, or by their belonging to an age invested in our minds with a character of grandeur. Greek tragedy was at first but an interlude in, or rather a form of worship, a mode of presenting vividly to the minds of devotees the great actions of the gods, the epoch-forming scenes of an elder world. Then it came down to heroes, and recalled to the minds of the spectators with grand simplicity some mighty achievements of their heroic ancestors. Lastly, it put upon the stage scenes of great emotion and great passion, such as might be actually happening in real life at the very time they were represented on the stage ; but raised into something of the dignity belonging to the other subjects of tragedy by a certain grandeur of thought, a majestic slowness of action, and a general sculpturesqueness of scene. Horace gave good advice to the tragic poet of his late age, when the equality of the Romans prevented their making good characters for a tragedy, to take his *dramatis personæ* out of the *Iliad*.*

Comedy is of later growth, for it requires more liberty and more equality ; liberty, because those who are derided are not exclusively inferior, for aristocrats would think it mean and vulgar to be employed in laughing at their subjects. There must be liberty, therefore, to laugh at equals, and sometimes perhaps at a superior. Comedy may flourish in a highly refined court, where fashion and etiquette have produced a well-observed equality of manners, because eccentricities from this equality, whether they be of fellow-nobles or of *roturiers*, are the fair subject of amusing comedies. As equality increases, and eccentricity becomes more remarked and envy more common, the power and popularity of comedy increases, and tragedy, which sympathises with unaccustomed situations,

* "Rectius Iliacum carmen diducis in actus, Quam si," &c. — *Ep. ad Pison.*

and requires much of the statue-like repose* and sublimity of aristocratic life, is less in favour; but when complete equality is established there can be no tragedy, and scarce any good comedy; for while no one dares to represent scenes of sublimity which do not often occur, and would appear unnatural and tiresome if not ridiculous, and tragedy is therefore out of place; so, on the other hand, comedy loses its subject, for no one dares to depart from the general level of manners and opinions except the humblest and most vulgar domestics. Eccentricity becomes then mere want of common education, and exciting contempt rather than ridicule affords no scope for comedy. For the secret of comedy is its proving to us, in a sudden lively way, our own superiority over persons to whom we were not quite sure before that we were superior. In America every one is so convinced of this superiority, that comedy has no field of action; except, indeed, such comedy as is directed against foreigners; for the Americans, however much they may boast, do not consider it beyond proof, that their country is superior to others, or their countrymen superior to other people.

Thus tragedy has always preceded comedy, and died out before it, and comedy at last has lost its force for want of subject, and the country which I have just named is in a stage later than the existence of either of them. The refined and lofty feelings of tragedy would be dull and tiresome to the Americans. The repose of high tragedy does not consist, of course, in the absence of movement, but in slowness and grandeur of movement. The *dramatis personæ* are moved from the very depths of their feelings; the movement is grand and deep. They must be aroused by some great emergency, and

* "Tanta solet esse industria (activity) hominum novorum, ut nobiles præ illis tanquam statuæ videantur."—*Bacon, Antitheta on Nobility*, ed. Whately, p. 120.

when aroused they act with something of that slow and thoughtful majesty so much allied in our minds with repose. On the other hand, comedy is quick and light, bustling, noisy, and continually surprising and amusing by sudden and unexpected turns. Its persons are not so deeply and solemnly roused as in tragedy, but they are always in a state of garrulous commotion. Tragedy wears out when the mere forms are retained, and the state of society is not fertile in the production of tragic sympathies*, whereas comedy changes with the change of society, and lasts so long as there are inequalities and eccentricities, and unaccustomed situations to form a groundwork for it; but where the elements of society have all been shaken together like sand in a bucket, and one smooth level surmounts them all, there are no ambitious freaks to be pointed at and derided, and proved—however lofty they may look—to be hollow inside, and no better than their fellows, whom they try to out-top; and the occupation of comedy is therefore gone.

As too much equality impairs comedy, so too little equality has the same effect. The little states of Italy, having each a different dialect and set of customs, prevented there being as in Athens (which was the only literary place in Greece), or in Paris, or among the courtiers of St. James's, one acknowledged plateau of good manners and breeding, from which to deviate was to incur the attack of comedy. There was no centre from which to be eccentric. The Italian comedies are therefore rather satires than true comedies.

In the early ages of national life, which are those of happiness and merriment, there is little satire. It may be that a particular class renders itself obnoxious by its

* "To raise and afterwards to calm the passions, to purge the soul from pride, by the examples of human miseries which befall the greatest; in a few words, to expel arrogance, and to introduce compassion are the great effects of tragedy; great, I must confess, if they were altogether as true as they are pompous."—*Dryden's Works*, xiv. 312.

depravity and exactions, as did the clergy of the pre-reformation period, when satire is well levelled at them ; but satire is not then the prevailing tone of literature. Whereas in the late ages of unrest and envy, when every man is trying to " better " himself, and hating those who are above him and stand in his way, no literature is so frequent, so natural, as the satiric. The poets cannot touch a fine subject, but they burlesque it ; they cannot write an epic, they can only produce a mock heroic.*

There are two subsidiary causes for this. First, literature is originally the creation of an aristocracy, and when aristocracy becomes decayed and depraved it delights in satire ; the rage and strife of two contending parties in the aristocracy, no longer warring with weapons but with words, contributes much to this ; and thus it happens that the tone of satire is infused into the literature of a country at a time when the commons are sufficiently refined to take up literature and make it their own. Secondly, the position of the literary man, always an unhappy wretch in proportion to the narrowness of his field of work, is more hateful and unhappy in a commercial than in an aristocratic age : in the latter, he receives fame and place in reward for genius ; in a purely commercial age, these are not the coin with which deserving persons are paid. Money is then the object of labour, and the literary man is not paid in due proportion to the harassing nature of his occupation. He sees others getting rich around him with far less toil and with use of far inferior faculties. Cordially, therefore, is he sarcastic and discontented.

Hence satire and burlesque form the prevailing tone in the literatures of late and restless ages.

The result of such observations as these, and of many others too long to be here enumerated, might be the

* See the romantic poets in Italy after Ariosto. Prescott, Misc., p. 461.

conclusion, that to each phase of national life is attached, by a natural harmony, a particular form of literature. And this happens as a result from the law that to the several social forces are attached particular forms of literature; and the commingling in different proportions of the social forces of a nation, produces a like commingling of these particular forms of literature; and the general result is that as to each phase of national progress belongs a peculiar adjustment of the social elements, so to it also belongs a peculiar literature.

Now the literature of a pure unmixed aristocracy is the Homeric, in which the deeds of a few magnificent chieftains are transacted before the spectator with the rude and noble simplicity of nature. Such ballads form the literature which has belonged to the early age of every known nation, the age of its warrior aristocracy. The literature of Grecian, Roman, Gothic, Norman, and Spanish civilisation begins with such compositions and such alone.* The heroes stand out in bold relief, with the naked energy of Michael Angelo's figures, and need none of the tinsel appendages of plutocratic nor the minute detail of democratic depicitors.

One other social element is invariably dominant during the age of early aristocracy, and this is the theocratic. But the literature of theocracy is necessarily very various in different countries, according to the nature and complexion of the religion in vogue. Most religions have a secret lore of their own, whether it be the augury of Etruria, the astrology of the Chaldees, the mysteries of the Druids, or the true and false legends of Christianity; but it is only as affecting practical life that religion becomes important in moulding the true literature of the early ages.

Throughout the heroic ballad literature of every nation

* Excepting, of course, family annals and genealogies like those of Spain, which are, in fact, only the prosaic materials of the ballads.

this religious feature is conspicuous. With chivalry, practical religion goes hand in hand. The man who is proud and haughty to other men, humbles himself before God; and, like the heroes of antiquity, traces his descent from divine beings, or, like the Castilians, the Crusaders, and the Moslems, devotes his chivalry to the cause of faith. The ballads of Spain and the crusading nations are deeply imbued with the spirit of doctrinal heroism, but it never overcomes the chief characteristic in the early warrior aristocratic literature, which loves to narrate to the warriors and their subjects the motives and bold struggles, both mental and bodily, of a few great men, the masters of those ages.

Let this be the acknowledged characteristic of aristocratic literature, and then it is curious to trace it through the whole progress of a nation changing with the changes of the aristocratical element. Sparta, which never progressed beyond the aristocratic stage, never had any other literature than this. In progressive nations, when history succeeds to ballad-*tales*, if there is a strong and active aristocracy, history consists of the record of the acts and words of these aristocrats and their monarchs. The proceedings of the populace remain almost as insignificant as those of the masses who fought behind Homer's chiefs. They glimmer sometimes, through an opening in the front rank, but history as a whole consists of a series of great men's portraits. Of this nature is the history of our own country as written by contemporary writers down to the middle of the last century. Lord Clarendon's work of the Rebellion, is a fine example of this sort of aristocratic histories.

Now aristocracy generally descends from its exclusive eminence, or rather other social forces come into competition with it at the epoch which marks the national acme, and thus the literature of the acme, though produced mainly by aristocratic influence, ceases to concern itself exclusively with the acts of the aristocrats, either in war or in

the senate, or in those scenes of trial of which tragedy consists. But in France aristocracy and monarchy continued to assert political supremacy at a stage when other countries would have been constitutional, and this peculiarity of French society is strongly marked in French literature. Everything was thrown into the shape of personal memoirs. All the events of the nation were clustered into the biographies of their kings, a few prominent courtiers, and a circle of fine ladies. Thus the character of aristocratic literature was, like aristocracy itself, carried to a more extravagant and unnatural pitch in that country than was ever known elsewhere. Voltaire was the first in France to break the belief that history consisted in the memoirs of the great; and the same achievement in English literature was accomplished by Hume. For both historians were contemporary with the periods in their several countries when aristocratic monarchy was ceasing to be the sole ruling force of the state.

In Roman history the same difference is conspicuous. While Rome was under an aristocratic republic, its history consisted of the records of the achievements of great men. Gradually these prominent figures became less marked by originality of character, and at last, under the empire, there was nothing to be described but the acts of the functionary government on the one hand, and of the governed mass on the other.*

As in the strife of the social elements, in every instance some gain the mastery and distort the national development from that which is its true normal form, so the accompanying forms of literature appear in sympathetic disproportion. In Spain, for instance, which was full of chivalry and of theology, there was a finer Homeric

* "The history of the empire will be much briefer in proportion than that of the republic, for in the latter we had to consider all the separate men who acted a prominent part; whereas under the empire we shall have to deal with the government on the one hand and with the masses on the other."—*Niebuhr, H. R.* v. 137.

literature than in any other nation of modern Europe, but deeply tinctured with fanaticism ; there was also a great mass of pure theological literature, polemics and scholasticism, the gloomy offspring of the cloister ; there was also no inconsiderable drama, which, like the later Castilian poetry, was the creature of the refined and courtly aristocracy ; but for sound democratic common sense, stern, honest, and searching inquiry, physical and theoretical philosophy, or science, our search in Spain were fruitless, because the democracy never arrived at sufficient culture to raise up its appropriate literature, and because the aristocracy and the court were never so far emancipated from, or so equal with, the theocracy as to admit into Spanish literature the boldness of the English, the licence of the Italian, or the gaiety of the French thinkers. To take another instance ; the aristocratic element in Lombardy and Tuscany was stunted and of short duration ; accordingly in Italian literature there is less of the ballad, narrative, lyric poetry, the true accompaniment of a warrior aristocracy, than in Spain or in Great Britain.

So offshoots from nations which branch off from the parent stem at the time when the old nation is becoming democratic or plutocratic, and have therefore no aristocratic element in them, are in the first place destitute altogether of literature, in the true sense of the term, because it is the contribution of aristocracy to the national acme ; and in the second place such literature as they have consists of matter of fact statistical or satiric, and highly coloured writings. Being without one social element, they are without its appropriate literary concomitant. The true poetic element which comes down from an early feudal age, and to which the poets of an Augustan age in memory revert, had no existence in the Dutch or the Venetian republics, and has none in our transatlantic colonies, or in the United States.

Mr. Justice Haliburton says : " There is no literature in the colonies, because they have no poet, no infancy, no

growth. They have grown up suddenly, have no settled orders, no nobility, no castles which have formerly been strongholds, and told tales of rapine and oppression ; their rivers have no names, their streams have no legends ; they have no fairies, no superstitions, their people are plain hard matter of fact men. As matter of fact men, poets are not valued among them, for there can be no poets where there are no memories."

Respect for authority in matters of opinion is a characteristic of early literature, produced as it is both by the religious and the aristocratic temper of the age. The latter predisposes men to feel respect for any great name and any revered memory, and the former builds the whole of its system upon respect for authority. Our older writers, it has been well remarked*, are accustomed to cite authorities, and that most profusely, for matters of opinion ; while for facts they often omit to cite any. Every one may trace in our literature the gradual transition to the present exclusive taste for " facts " and proofs ; a taste not wholly to be reprobated when it is remembered that it is a form, however uninviting, of the temper of mind that leads to discoveries in science.

Connected with this respect for authority is another characteristic of the literature of modern nations in its most flourishing period,—the arduous and loving study of classical literature. This is in part but an effect of the sympathy which always exists between different nations in the same stage ; a sympathy greater than that between the members of the same nation at different stages of its development : as in architecture, the Grecian appears to our imagination less ancient and alien than the Gothic†, and partly this love for classical literature arises in a nation at its acme, because to the aristocratic temper of the times is congenial a respect for authority and a lively recollection of the past. That temper of mind

* Whately's *Rhetoric*, p. 122.

† Reynolds' *Discourses*, ii. 138.

loves to dwell upon the past, when it recalls in ballads and banquet songs the illustrious deeds of noble ancestors, and bids each new heir of a distinguished house bear the banner and the motto of those who first made it famous, and whom it would be a shame upon him to disgrace; and it fosters the same strain of feeling when it studies the great examples of antiquity, whose characters, recorded for our admiration, are all of the aristocratic caste. The scientific mind, as well as the democratic classes, despise and dislike antiquity. Thus, as democracy increases and aristocracy declines, the study of the classical authors engrosses a less proportion of the time of the student, and by the old grammar castle rises the commercial school, to which it best suits the taste of the citizens to send their sons. People long continue to comment on the classics, but they do not feel them, because the state of society for which the classic authors or rather the best of them wrote, has no representative among those who read them.

Every other social force has its peculiar literature attached to it, whether it be ornate descriptions for a plutocracy, satire or wild theories for incipient democracy, or statistics for both. The course of national progress consists in the elevation and depression of these forces. With them rise and fall their appropriate literature. The acme is the period when all these forces attain a pitch of nearly equal eminence, and by their union give the greatest splendour to the state; and the acme is the period when the several kinds of literature attain nearly equal development. There is in the acme less of the fine heroic tone, the military artlessness, the hurried frankness that belong to an earlier age, for aristocracy is less exclusively prominent; there is less of the minute and accurate knowledge of science than in a later age, for the classes to whom physical knowledge is most congenial are in the acme only yet attaining sufficient strength to begin their literature, so there is less respect

for authority than before, less delight in gorgeous ornament than afterwards. Though, therefore, the literature of the acme is excelled in many individual particulars by the literature of preceding and succeeding periods; as a whole, the literature of a nation is never more perfect than during its acme, and the several excellences which are then reached, are retained in due harmony and proportion by a correctness of style, which, while it removes the rugged inequalities and the wild imagination of earlier ages, keeps free from the minute and spiritless monotony which in the latest ages is only relieved by bombast and fustian. This is why the acme of every country has been likewise the classical age of its literature. For the elements of national greatness, whether literary or other, are like the rays of a parti-coloured lamp;—any one colour would dazzle and distress the beholder, two alone would jar, but three or more of equal brilliancy produce an harmonious and gorgeous effect, upon which the eye rests with pleasure and admiration.

CHAP. XI.

THE NATIONAL ACME.—THE SCHOOLS OF STATESMEN
AND THE AGE OF ORATORY.

WITH different pace, after various fashions, and with fortune still more various, the nations of the world traverse the course of national development. He who describes a course of this kind can never, in a world of imperfection, hope to find an example of what he describes complete in all its parts. The course sketched out is what disciples of Aristotle would call the *ἐντελέχεια* of nations, or that which they are capable of attaining. Each stage of society has a special aptitude for attaining a special development. We find to what this aptitude leads by observing among the various instances which history has recorded to what each instance tends, and that which the most fully developed has attained we called the *ἐντελέχεια*, or perfect development of that stage. The perfect development of the successive stages forms the perfect development of national life.

It were a great and noble enterprise to determine the power and influence of statesmen in aiding the nations that they govern to attain the perfect development for which they are adapted. In the general government of the world, the great and comprehensive movements take place at the command of a high and inscrutable power, which yet leaves to man to regulate the details of those movements, and, after a humble fashion, to co-operate in promoting them. The laws of physical science, when

put in action, as they may be by man, act in a manner beyond the control of our species ; but to decide whether, in particular instances, they shall, or shall not, be put into action, is one of man's noblest prerogatives. And so I believe, and the reader has now had presented to his attention some reasons for that belief, that though the great and general course of national progress is decreed by Him who created the beings by whose union and society nations are formed, yet that it is in the power of those beings to determine not only whether their several nations shall enter upon that course of progress, but also it is given to them to rule the pace and the manner in which that course is traversed. Nations cannot go off the rails upon which the command of a Divine power requires them to proceed ; but to their statesmen, in some measure at least, it is committed to determine how they shall run upon these rails.

The idea of national progress is the passage through a series of phases marked by distinct and obvious characteristics. It were difficult to imagine, that those who are at the head of the progressing nation, and conduct it through a phase, or from one phase to another, should not take their complexion from the climate in which they steer. The phases are distinguished by the different forms of social order which are therein respectively established. Those who are at the head of the nation have belonging to them characteristics attributable to the social order in which they act. Hence arise what I call the schools of statesmen. It may be true that there is a general character pervading all persons who at any time assume to guide their nations ; but the distinctions in the schools of statesmen are determined by the point in the national progress at which such school assumes to rule. And I, therefore, seek to portray here the schools of statesmanship previously to, and preceding the national acme, and to lay down *that the national acme is the age of oratory.*

After the conquest, or pseudo-conquest, which gives the first start to national progress, the dominant race takes upon itself the whole duty of governing. Its position is that of an invading army. In the little states of Greece, and in ancient Rome, the invaders, or those who, by prior occupation of the soil, and subsequent admittance of an inferior race, held the place of conquerors, lived together in towns as they would in a camp. Each, perhaps, inhabited a fortified castle; but these castles all lay near together, and the subjects were distinguished as those who lived outside the town, which, in fact, consisted only of these feudal residences. Whereas, in modern nations, the invaders rather settled on separate domains, living in castles far distant from each other, surrounded by retainers, whose fidelity was secured by the lord giving them his protection against the incursions of neighbouring lords.

So great a difference in the mode of life produced a difference in the character of the governors. When the leaders were gathered together in a town, or collection of seignorial houses, the necessity of an organisation led to the legislative achievements of Lycurgus, Solon, Romulus, and the many other half-mythical persons who devised laws, according to which those who had fought side by side might live in peaceful dominion over the territories and the subjects they had acquired.

The barons of the middle ages, instead of living in a common society in towns, which were in fact armed camps, settled themselves in isolated castles. In many cases this produced a state of anarchy and disorganisation, each baron being sovereign in his own territory.

In many parts of Germany these independent baronies never coalesced, and in France centuries passed before they did so. The little potentates reigned over their principalities according to the impulses of their nature and the endurance of their subjects. Like most great landlords who live on their estates, they would rather partake

the happiness and merriment of their dependants than be saddened by the spectacle of their distress. So long as these barons remain in a state of sovereign independence their management of their dominions bears but a very remote relation to what is understood by statesmanship. Their combination alone produces nations, and gives rise to statesmanship: for the collected barons in their assembly have need of the same organisation as the Greek warriors in their camp town, and meet to choose a head, and settle laws for the government of themselves and their subjects.

This primitive distinction in the social arrangements of the ancient and modern aristocracy accounts for the difference between the ancient and modern schools of aristocratic statesmanship. The ancients collected together, as it were, in a camp, although their tent-castles might be grand and fortified, were firmly impressed, above all things, with their duty to the state, which was little else than a military brotherhood, established for their common protection, and requiring obedience to the discipline of the legislator. For if we examine what interests were the chief care of the earlier legislators of Greece, more especially of the Spartan, we shall find that their solicitude was directed to the maintenance of the aristocratic dominion possessed by the lords of the town over the dispersed inhabitants of the country, or those subject retainers whom they kept about their persons. To preserve their dominion, a discipline was established, more openly military and camp-like in Sparta than in other places, but still everywhere requiring, in the name of duty to the state, considerable sacrifices from the individual aristocrats.

The aristocrats of modern Europe proceeded on a different principle. Accustomed, after a rude fashion, to legislate for their own territories individually, they met in pompous assembly to legislate for these territories collectively. Their legislation, equally with that of the

ancients, was directed to the preservation of the power of the nobles ; but the nobles, strong in the affections and fears of their several subjects, were less united to each other, and indeed had less reason for this union than the aristocrats of ancient Greece ; and the consequence of this is, that their statesmanship regarded the individual much more than the state, and, being the result rather of conflicting contentions of independent potentates, than of the thoughtful care of one or two wise men deputed to legislate for the whole nation, the laws of the old aristocracies of Europe have a less systematic and scientific character than those of the ancient aristocratic legislators ; and though some great monarchs of the middle ages, representing in their persons the unity of the nation, and enforcing that unity by the establishment, or rather the collection of laws which should bind the whole of the constituent baronies together, have achieved a legislative reputation, like Edward the Confessor ; yet the modern aristocracies had not that glory of central and scientific legislation which surrounds the memory of Solon, Lycurgus, Minos, Romulus, and Numa ; and perhaps these considerations on the difference of the social condition of the ancient and modern aristocrats may explain the difference of their statesmanship.

One characteristic belongs always to the statesmanship of aristocracy : whether the aristocrats reside in towns or in isolated castles, and whether they start with a simple code of laws collected by a wise monarch, or with a medley of laws thrown up as the froth of the turbulent and contentious commingling of antagonistic interests, their legislation aims principally at maintaining the good order of the state, the maintenance of the established distinctions, and discourages all the elements of change. Nowhere was this characteristic more conspicuous than in Sparta, where the legislator provided both against the establishment of a monarchy—which is often a great means of advancing the national progress—and against

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the introduction of trade or manufactures—which the history of all nations proves to be the great means of raising to power the democratic element.

The wonderful foresight of the Spartan legislator was not possessed by the law-makers of other aristocracies; but though they did not sufficiently anticipate the causes of change to be able to prevent them, their legislation, unlike that of most other stages of national progress, was always intended to provide for the maintenance of the established order. They administer for the guidance of the commonwealth, as they would for their own estates; but above all, when their supremacy is in danger, they legislate for its support, and provide that military habits should be taught the youth of the aristocrats, so as to enable them to retain by the sword that which their ancestors had gained by it. Thus, says Aristotle, it would seem as if politics, in the view of the statesmen of Sparta, of Crete, of the Persians, the Thracians, and the Scythians, were the science of absolute power.

In the progress of nations, may be traced two distinct currents of feeling—one, strong in the origin of nations, and becoming weaker as they advance; the other, hardly perceptible at first, becoming dominant in the later stages of national progress. They may be described, the one as predominating in sentiment, the other in calculation.

The first inspires men rather to hold fast by those connected with them, whether by feudal or military ties, consanguinity, or neighbourhood. The aristocratic legislator regards those tied to him in any of these methods with a peculiar interest. Hence arise his notions of the duty of patronising home manufactures, of employing “our people” rather than foreigners, and estimating with the more tenderness each narrowing circle as it approaches towards himself in the centre; he would rather give a job to his own tenants, or to his own parishioners, or to his own townsfolk, or his own country people, than to persons more remote, though better

skilled. These sentiments are of the very essence of poetry, producing all that devotion to a chief, that village idolatry, and those local jealousies and rivalries which infuse into earlier national life a very large poetic tinge, and induce men of poetical mind in later ages to live mentally in the early ages; as, for example, Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge. When society becomes more settled, and the declining turbulence of the nobles calls forth less seldom to private and local war the great lords and their retainers, this current of sentiment, though not perhaps dimmed in its intensity, has a different practical manifestation. It then gives their usefulness and stability to the resident gentry, who, no longer by arms, but by a certain grandeur of position, by hospitality, participation in sports, and by the graceful benefactions of their "Ladies Bountiful," attach to themselves the same loyalty and devotion which belonged of old to the military chieftains — their ancestors, and enable themselves to take the lead in influencing thought in their neighbourhood, not by intimidation, but by the force of example and the persuasion of sympathy. It may be no longer necessary to lead their dependants to war, but they gather round them the similar interests of their neighbours, prepared to defend them in the national councils, to which the gentry go with all the prestige and power of the ancient Roman patrons. As Warwick Castle recalls to our imaginations, perhaps better than any other of the feudal remains of this country, the earlier ages of a settled warrior aristocracy, so the Elizabethan mansions of England remind us of the time when persons believed with Raleigh, "that a resident gentry in the provinces are the garrisons of good order spread through the realm," and acted upon that belief, which even now is not entirely exploded.

As the other current predominates, men consider rather what will be *advantageous* to themselves and to the general community, in whose welfare they partake. If

it is cheaper to buy of foreigners they will not hesitate to do so, although their fellow-countrymen may be starving at their doors, because if they employ foreigners for what foreigners are fittest, foreigners will employ their countrymen for what their countrymen are fittest ; and this will in the end be more profitable to both parties than if each were employed at what they were least fit to execute, merely because they lived near their employers. Machinery, and the duty of every private trader to attend solely to his private interest, can be defended on the same grounds. None, perhaps, have carried it further in practice than the chief magistrate of Antwerp, who when that city was besieged by the Spaniards openly sold arms, ammunition, and provisions to the besiegers, and gloried in it, and said that to prosecute his trade he would sail through hell at the risk of singeing his sails. He was not wrong, say the political economists, because if the arms and provisions were taken by his countrymen, so much the more gain to them ; if delivered to the enemy and paid for, so much the more gain to him and to the state of which he was a member. Somebody must supply the arms and food to the Spaniards, and was it not better for Antwerp that the purchase money should belong to an inhabitant of that city.* In the same way the Venetians, who incurred the odium of the rest of Christendom for driving a trade with the Turks, might be defended. This spirit is essential to those who would be good political economists. Coleridge, for instance, who was continually discussing questions belonging to that science, always erred, because he looked at them in the sentimental point of view — the point of view in which early ages naturally regarded them.

Those who — often unconsciously to themselves — regard each man as an equal unit, and consider it desirable for the interest of the nation that each man should be

* This is Franklin's defence of him : Works, ii. 387.

able to purchase the greatest possible amount of the products of nature and art at the lowest possible price, disapprove of the existence of gentlemen; and if they must exist they had better (say these theorists) reside in towns, for, according to this view, a resident country gentry inculcate idleness, and keep a crowd of retainers and half-employed dependants, while a large portion of their land is given up to parks, and game-preserves, and hunting grounds; whereas if all the gentry are agglomerated in the capital, the number of their retainers kept in unproductive idleness is less, and their money goes to support industrious artisans, who manufacture silks, and carpets, and knickknacks, while their estates are managed by agents, who extract much more rent from the tenants, and consequently compel the latter to produce more from the ground wherewith to pay it.

The state of society which ought to — I know not whether it does — excite the most admiration from this school is the state of society in France. There are, comparatively speaking, no great country mansions which would lie waste while the owners are at Paris, and the Parisian plutocrats spend their money in the purchase of articles of luxury and show, the production of which is by economists supposed to contribute to the national wealth. There is no class of gentry gathering round them local interests and sympathies. The Parisian plutocrat, whatever may have been the protective policy of his government, has never been personally particular as to the place whence his luxuries come, nor is he particular as to the persons upon whom his money is lavished; while scarce any of the surface of France is devoted to parks, pleasure grounds, or game preserves.

Probably the economist would rather see the plutocrats of Spain spend their lives as they do in the costly idleness of the capital, than upon their estates; though his satisfaction with Spanish society can hardly be so great as with French, since in Spain the possession of domains

by the nobles, though they never inhabit them, takes so much land out of cultivation. "The Madrid life of the *grandees*," said one who was not an economist, but possessed an intimate acquaintance with that country, "is truly deplorable; they herd amongst each other, and yet unsocially; they are mere funnels of expense. They waste their ill-paid revenues in tasteless *gaspillage*, without order, show, elegance, luxury, or common hospitality; they are ruined by their establishments of servants who live under their roofs — the expensive *clientela* of Rome without the support. Their huge, uncomfortable, ill-furnished houses are whitened sepulchres, wherein all that enters is consumed in unseemly corruption. Meanwhile their uncultivated domains, decaying hamlets, poverty-stricken tenantry, dismantled castles, treeless parks, and weed-encumbered gardens, demonstrate the effects of a constant absenteeism, and the complete annihilation of the wholesome relation of landlord and tenant. . . . These are the effects of absenteeism in Spain."

These are, then, the two opposite currents running through national society — the one extreme conspicuous in most feudal ages, the other conspicuous in the late ages of plutocracy; which latter, as has been sufficiently noted, are the ages when political economy is most in vogue. Each has its school of statesmen — the former, Raleigh, and all our old English statesmen; the latter, Mr. M'Culloch, and those who, throwing overboard sentiment and emotion, pursue reason and calculation exclusively, and, in short, worship Mammon scientifically. Now English society — as in fact does, more or less, the society of every nation in its acme — combines these two opposite currents. "An English gentleman who lives on his estate," says Archbishop Whately*, "is considered as a public benefactor, not only by exerting himself, if he does so, in promoting sound religion, and pure morality, and useful

* Annotations to Bacon's Essays, p. 358.

knowledge in his neighbourhood, but also because his income is spent in furnishing employment to his *neighbours* as domestics, and bakers, and carpenters, &c." So far he obtains the approval of the Raleigh school, but the Archbishop seems to approve him as much, if not more, when he lives where it best pleases him, and buys the goods which best suit him. "If he removes and resides in France, his income is, in fact, spent on English cutlers and clothiers, since it is their products that are exported to France, and virtually exchanged — though in a slightly circuitous way — for the services of French domestics, bakers, and carpenters. But the Sheffield cutlers are not aware even of his existence, while the neighbours of the resident proprietor trace distinctly to him the profits they derive from him."

As the English gentleman is a cross between the feudal seigneur and the city plutocrat, and in his mode of life reconciles these two opposite currents of sentiment and calculation, keeping a country estate and spreading, so far as he can, happiness and prosperity around him, and cultivating influence and position among his neighbours, at the same time not objecting to sell and buy many of his wares in the cheapest market; so English statesmanship at the present day is the result of the same fusion; for the current of sentiment, if I may so call it, prevails in the days of aristocracy, and gives its character to aristocratic statesmen, who rule in the youth of nations. It prevailed in the early days of English history, and is now attempered with the political economy and sentiment-hating expediency of plutocracy.

The statesmen of aristocracy are usually themselves aristocrats. At first these are mere rude chieftains, full of poetry and sentiment and bravery, but too unreflecting to deserve to be called statesmen; as they become settled and more refined, the character of military chieftainship is succeeded by that of resident patrons. A true country aristocracy can have no other character but this.

There are two or three other characteristics belonging to aristocratic statesmanship, which in great part result from this character of aristocracy. In the first place, the conclave of feudal lords rules for the nation as each rules for his barony and his tenantry, not confining themselves to mere matters of police, litigation, or taxation, but regulating the morals and the life of the people. The wish of the baron, when he is not so great a tyrant as to provoke opposition, is law in his territory, and the wishes of the combined barons are law throughout the country. The first wish of such rulers in a sound and healthy nation is to have a happy and well-to-do populace; and for the gratification of this wish, having little reliance on the spontaneous efforts of the tenantry, they carry their legislation into such matters* that, though not felt so by the people of those ages, it to us appears meddlesome, interfering, and oppressive. The means which they take may be, and political economy has in later ages demonstrated that they are, mistaken and prejudicial; but the ends which they design to accomplish are good, and the subjects, knowing the ends to be good, and not seeing the error of the means, so far from writhing under this legislation, look upon its authors as the wise fathers of the people.

Lord Bacon, like all the public men of his time, was a statesman of this school. His *Essays* inculcate the duty of sumptuary laws, restrictive of waste and excess: laws to regulate the improvement and husbandry of the soil, the prices of the markets, and the interest that money should bear.† Men were not then permitted to do what they would with their own. Manufacturers could not drive down the wages of their workmen, nor could the landowner refuse to keep, in sickness and in sorrow, the

* Observe the attempt of this aristocratic legislation to check the growth of London. Clarendon, *Hist. of the Rebellion*, ii. 151.

† *Essay on Seditions and Troubles*.

peasant who supplied his lordly state, nor turn, at his pleasure, his own arable into pasture land ; for so the country became depopulated of the "bold peasantry, a country's pride." In return, the peasant could not change his landlord so readily, nor move from place to place, and let himself out to whom he would, with the freedom of the nineteenth century.*

So in the aristocracies of antiquity. The wise old men enacted rigid laws, which ruled the daily life of the people. They, residing in a camp-like town, partook more of the character of military chieftains than of independent barons ; but the spirit of their legislation was the same : to provide, above all things, for the good order of the state, and the well-being of the populace ; and to accomplish that end, they did not scruple to impose what would now be considered an intolerable shackle upon the occupations of the people. We have all heard of the strict laws of Lycurgus, which laid down for every man the employment of every day. In Athens the rigour was less, but the principle the same. By the laws of Solon the Athenians were bound to cultivate gymnastic exercises at stated periods ; and they obeyed without reluctance as long as their government was aristocratic ; but when they became democratic, these exercises were neglected, and every man did as he pleased.†

According to the views of Englishmen of the present age, this characteristic of aristocratic statesmanship amounts to overgoverning ; and this would seem to possess one of the faults of despotic functionarism ; but there is a radical difference between the overgoverning of an early aristocracy and that of a late despotism. The former is the overgoverning of a too-zealous landlord, wishing to improve vigorously his estate, and promote the well-being of those upon it, but not too well informed as to

* See Froude's *History of England*, i. 80, 272, 406.

† *Xenoph. De Rep. Athen.* c. i. § 13. *Arist. Ran.* v. 1069.

the means of doing so. The interference is, it will be observed, in early ages, more for the advancement of the people than for their mere regulation :—to make them rich and healthy, good defenders of their country, and honest in their ways, rather than merely to govern them, to control their minute movements, and decree when they shall travel, how they shall go to theatres, how they shall be taught. In early ages the aristocratic government interferes by saying, that in addition to the natural mode of living the subjects shall, for their good, do certain decreed acts. In the functionary meddling system the government says that the subject shall not live except in the particular track and trammels laid down by government. The former species of interference encourages and excites industry, for even though it may take the shape of restraint upon particular trades or imposts, it does so only to encourage other trades and home productions ; whereas, the latter prohibits the doing of everything, unless done according to state regulation. In the former the legislator is a kind teacher, the adviser of the people, urging them to good works and exercises for their own benefit, and no other purpose ; he has, as it were, taken the prudential maxims out of old Hesiod, and turned them into laws. In the latter the legislator, first declares half the people's natural acts to be illegal, and then, like a spy, hunts out and punishes this moiety of their natural energy. In the former, the larger portion of the nation never directly feels the interference of the government : in the latter, the functionaries have a perpetual bridle upon every man. The former is the code of men, placed by firm social institutions in a superior rank, and using their superiority for the purpose of establishing throughout the nation what they believe to be good for its physical and moral welfare : the other is a scheme for maintaining trading functionaries, and keeping the people quiet from revolution. As soldiers bear any strictness of discipline from officers whom they trust and revere with-

out feeling the strictness, but would mutiny against half as much strictness in officers whom they distrust : so in governments, the early aristocratic government is trusted and revered by the nation, whether on good grounds or not, it concerns us not to say ; the functionary government is distrusted ; and hence the rule of the one is felt to be strict, while that of the other is not so.

It is, therefore, to be laid down as a characteristic of aristocratic government, that the aristocracy governs the nation at large very much as each of them governs his own estate or his own retainers. And thus in all sound aristocracies, the desire of well-being and improvement leads to the enactment of many rules and regulations, which to us, living in a constitutional age, when the principle of *laissez faire* is in the ascendant, appear to savour too much of contest and dictation.

I am concerned now to show that this habit of aristocratic government receives countenance and assistance from the habits of those who are at the head of the other social forces, which, in the early stages of a national career, share the rule with aristocracy. These are theocracy and monarchy. The former is constantly present during the time of aristocratic rule. In some countries, as in Greece, and to a considerable extent in Rome, the aristocracy and theocracy were so combined that it is impossible to attribute a distinct influence in respect of this characteristic to theocracy, for the rulers were frequently both nobles and priests in their own persons. In the nations of modern Europe the union was not so complete ; but in them theocracy, though acting with more independence, and represented by different persons, yet added its influence to enforce this characteristic of aristocratic government. The priests, then comparatively uncorrupted, were, in fact, the only educated class in the state. From them were chosen the executive officers of the government. In France especially, for five centuries, from Segur to Fleury, the priesthood and the

law supplied the king's ministers *; and in addition to this ministerial authority, the hierarchy possessed a high authority, before which the nobles bowed themselves.

But the priests were, equally with the nobles, concerned to maintain the good order and well-being of the people, and not at all adverse to maintain these by the exercise of their priestly power. The nobles perhaps cared more and legislated more for the physical happiness of their subjects, requiring them to follow healthy pursuits, and live in peace and contentment; though it were a great slander on our old aristocrats to say that they cared not for the morals of the people, for they inculcated most rigidly honesty in dealing, and fairness in every operation of life, which are, if I mistake not, no slight elements towards forming a moral people; but for morals, in another sense, the ecclesiastics took upon themselves to provide. The Bishop's court was originally employed mainly in preserving purity of manners; it was but by a corruption that it became a court of revenue.†

A pure theocracy, therefore, governs with the same well-meant interference as a pure aristocracy.

The other force, the monarchy, at first, as I have frequently said, a mere excrescence of the aristocracy, when it assumes the force and power of a separate element, partakes as strongly of this characteristic as the aristocracy; for the monarch, himself a baronial proprietor, then looks upon the whole kingdom as his estate, and legislates for that in the manner in which the little barons are in the habit of legislating for their own baronies, and the conglomeration of baronies. No monarch ever carried this

* Michelet, *Hist. Rom.* i. 50.

† Lord Clarendon says that before the Revolution (1641) the power of the Bishop's court "was grown from an ecclesiastical court for the reformation of manners to a court of revenue, and imposed great fines upon those who were culpable before them."—*Hist. of the Rebellion*, i. 497.

mode of governing further than Frederic the Great, who was desirous to make his rude agricultural nation take its place among the flourishing communities of the time ; and for this purpose, taking counsel of history, he knew that it was necessary that the nation should have commerce, and endeavoured to force premature monopolies, which of course failed ; he made rules as to how much money a person might take out of the country, so as to prevent the country from being impoverished, and where he was to get his education, so as to promote the national universities,—all intended for the best. As the old English and French statesmen had hoped by their schemes and orders to improve the countries they governed, so Frederic hoped by his rules and encouragements to make Prussia a great nation. He was the most signal example of overgoverning among monarchs, but all intelligent and well-meaning monarchs have a tendency to fall into the same error. It is for our purpose, therefore, immaterial which of the social forces that dominate in the earlier stages of national progress gains the upper hand, for the legislation of each of them possesses this characteristic.

Another characteristic of statesmen in the earlier aristocratic stage of national existence is their great personal power. This is a natural result from the frame of aristocratic society, in which certain men are invested with enormous power and influence ; whereas in the later ages, when the whole population is more equalised, these great men are absent from the frame of society, and the claim of the statesman to be greater than his fellows arises somewhat from his natural cleverness, but principally from the supposed dignity of his office. As in the sculptures and paintings of the early Florentine and Roman schools the nobler figures stand forth in bold independence, and command our worship by their own dignity, unaided by drapery or symbolic adjuncts, so the statesmen of aristocracy bear about them a degree of personal grandeur and haughtiness which would belong

to them whether they were statesmen or not, and as again in the Venetian and other late Italian schools, it was by the display of drapery and the tinsel signs of opulence and splendour, rather than by portraying the personal dignity of the figure that the artist sought to excite the admiration and the reverence of the spectator, so in later plutocratic ages the statesmen are individually weak and of small personal importance, and whatever respect remains to be bestowed by the governed is then bestowed upon the system of government, not upon the individuals who rule. The thing not the person is regarded. Justly, for in this latter school of statesmanship it takes half a dozen signing and countersigning and registering and checking officials, all wearing a red-tape uniform, to issue a single order, that a nod of the head from one of the old proud aristocrats would have made the law of the land. Who can put him in one scale of public estimation and any one of the half-dozen in the other, and doubt which would kick the beam. The actual work got through by such a man of course exceeds prodigiously in amount the work of these individually impotent officials, and in proportion to the work he can by his undivided energies accomplish is the awe with which he will be regarded. The plutocratic Venetians when they visited the England of Henry VIII., though they were then far from being themselves so impotent as a modern plutocratic functionary is, were yet struck with this difference between the statesmen of the two countries. "Cardinal Wolsey," says Guistinian*, "alone transacts the same business as that which occupies all the magistrates, officers and councils of Venice, both civil and criminal; and all state affairs likewise, are managed by him, be their nature what they may."

The division of labour in government may have its advantages, but it most assuredly diminishes the personal importance and dignity of the statesman, who to maintain

* Guistinian, *Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII.*, translated by R. Brown, ii. 314.

an individual prominence not dependent merely on his office should have a certain force and originality of character which would be wholly lost in a signing and countersigning official. The aristocrats of an early age generally possess this force of character, and even when they do not, counterfeit it, as did the Earl of Arundel, of whom Lord Clarendon* says: "It cannot be denied that he had in his person, his aspect, and countenance the appearance of a great man, which he preserved in his gait and motion. He wore and affected a habit very different from that of the time, such as men had only beheld in the pictures of the most considerable men; all which drew the eyes of most and the reverence of many towards him, as the image and representative of the primitive nobility, and native gravity of the nobles when they had been most venerable." And this force and originality, as it is a social characteristic of the aristocracy, becomes a most marked and prominent characteristic of the aristocratic school of statesmen.

The observation of this characteristic helps to solve a curious problem. Why have the statesmen of certain periods in every great nation been distinguished orators, while the statesmen of other periods in the same nation have been singularly devoid of all oratorical ability?

Early ages attend more to the man than the thing — the character and position of the speaker rather than the matter of the speech are of weight. The speeches of the aristocrats are rather grave judgments than exciting arguments; they rise to a certain solemn kind of judicial eloquence, much fitted for expressing a dignified scorn of base and petty actions, and high self-devotion and self-respect, but little fitted to persuade one, who uninfluenced by the person of the speaker, should attend solely to the argument. Brevity is their natural characteristic, for it is a needless condescension to be profuse of words. If the

* History of the Rebellion, i. 99.

judgment is clearly expressed, the shorter it is the better. In this as in every other characteristic of a warlike and rude aristocracy the Spartans were conspicuous. Presently this lofty aristocratic character declines; men become more equal, and the voice and vote of one individual becomes less important in influencing the decision of another. Then if men speak, they speak to persuade by reason, by earnest appeal, by forcible illustration, by attack, by all the many tricks of which the rhetorician is master. The old aristocrat would not descend to use them, even though they supported an opinion which he dearly wished to prevail. The statesman of a more advanced period is compelled to use them in support of his honest opinions. The means sometimes get the better of the end, and the accomplished rhetorician without convictions, without a care for anything but success in each oratorical *glad et. 10* exercitation, takes up a thesis, like Carneades, only in order that he may argue in its favour. In the first state of things there is no oratory at all, in the second there is true oratory, in the third there is a false oratory. The second ever is more forcible than the third, because however equal men may be, however much pre-eminence may be grudged, the character of the speaker always has an influence with the auditor, and in an equality of oratorical powers, he will most readily persuade who is manfully speaking his honest and deliberate opinion.

This change comes over the statesmen of every nation in proportion as the *exclusive* power and influence of the aristocracy declines, and it becomes necessary for the statesman no longer to give a grave judicial sentence, but rather to enter upon a forensic argument. Compare, as Aristotle did, the speeches in Homer with the speeches in Sophocles, and still more in Euripides. The characters in Homer speak like proud aristocrats, each offering his grave counsel in the senate under the Grecian tents; this Aristotle calls speaking *πολιτικῶς*. The characters of Euripides speak as the statesmen of Greece did in the

days of Euripides, like equals trying by the arts of rhetoric to persuade their fellows; this is *ρητορικῶς*; and that is one of the many reasons why Homer gives a truer representation of the state of heroic society than Euripides. Demosthenes, Æschines, and the crowd of oratorical statesmen who thronged the bema of the Pnyx knew too well their audience and their own position among people who all thought themselves equal to the orators, to attempt the sententious style of the old statesmen, and addressed themselves to persuade by all the arts of rhetoric. Oratory in the true sense of the term as the art of persuasion, did not come into practice in Athens till the time of Pericles, and every one conversant with Grecian history will accede to the remark of Aristotle, that in his day eloquence had greater power than in the early ages of Greek history.

In Roman history the story is the same. The Scipios and the Leliuses and the elder Cato expressed themselves with order and good judgment, but they never used, or as they would have said, descended to the arts which Cicero thought it not degrading to practise. Cicero himself deemed meanly of the oratorical efforts of the ancient aristocrats of Rome. He read the speech which Appius made at the deliberation of the Senate, respecting the treaty with Pyrrhus, and found it unpleasing, for it was framed no doubt after the model of judicial eloquence. Appius being of opinion that it was important for the public good that the Senate should know what Appius thought upon the subject, and the reasons that led him to that conclusion, Appius, as part of his public duty, expressed this conclusion and his reasons without much care whether the Senate acceded to it or not, and certainly without descending to move their passions, or appeal to their prejudices, or use entreaty, flattery, or tears, which omissions would naturally give Cicero the idea that the speech was very bald and defective as a work of art. The animated oratory of which he was so consummate a master was introduced not many years before his birth by the

two Gracchi and Sulpitius, and Cicero thought it not unworthy to weep in the presence of the whole Senate in order by his own emotion to move theirs, a situation in which the hauteur of the old warriors would never have allowed them to place themselves.

The old Spanish grandees were as little disposed to descend to oratory as the Scipios and Leliuses and Homeric chieftains, and this hauteur of theirs is well sketched in a book called "Newes from Spayne," published in 1620. A council is supposed to be opened at Monzon in 1618. The Duke of Lerma entered and said: "The king, my master holding it more honourable to doe than to discourse, to take from you the expectation of oratorie, used rather in schools and pulpits than in counsels, hath appointed me president of this holy, wise, learned, and noble assembly, a man naturally of slow speech, and not desirous to quicken it by art or industrie, as holding action only proper to a Spaniard as I am by birth, to a souldier as I am by profession, to a king as I am by representation; take this therefore briefly for declaration, both of the cause of this meeting and my master's further pleasure."

And so the three great Flemish nobles, Orange, Egmont and Horn, in their correspondence with the king of Spain, excuse themselves for the simplicity of their letters; for, said they, we are not by nature suited for making orations and harangues, we are more accustomed to do good actions than good talking, as is better becoming people of our quality.*

In France all the attributes of a refined aristocracy were brought to a greater development than they have been in any other country; and in French history we find that the aristocratic style of eloquence arrived at a pitch of elegance and grace unapproached elsewhere. The principal cha-

* "D'autant que ne sommes point de nature grans orateurs ou harangueurs, et plus accoustumez à bien faire que à bien dire, comme aussy il est mieulx-séant à gens de notre qualité."—Correspondance de Guillaume le Tacit. Cited, *Motley's History of the Dutch Republic*, i. 385.

racteristic of this style is the tone of authority in which the orator speaks. He speaks as one whose opinion is of such importance that its expression is sure to command attention merely because it is his opinion. He is a judge delivering his solemn sentence with the few brief but well-considered reasons which have led him to his conclusion; not an advocate who first winning attention by his arts then goes on to prove himself right, and not content with that, shows independently the absurdity of his adversaries' case, and finds it necessary all the while to keep open the ears of his audience by impassioned apostrophes and purple patches. The aristocratic statesman lives in the age when to moral authority so much power and influence is allowed, that one placed by birth or weight of character in a position where he possesses this authority can speak like a judge and not an advocate. French society, from the time of Louis XIV. to the middle of the seventeenth century, was remarkable for the prevalence of this spirit of authority* which, being joined to classical taste and refinement, produced not the rugged yet noble sentences of Homer's orators, of Appian, of Milton in his prose works, of Selden and his great contemporaries in England—the rough and noble fruits of the principle of authority; nor, on the other hand, produced the fervent, impassioned, histrionic eloquence of Demosthenes, and still more Cicero, but produced a style of speaking in their pulpit, on their judicial bench, in the rostrum of their Academy, unexampled elsewhere, because

* Sainte-Beuve (Port Royal, i. 28) speaking of the Port Royal, says, "Moralement et sans tant s'inquiéter des rapports historiques, des comparaisons lointaines, le fruit direct est encore grand à tirer. Le trait le plus saillant de ces saints caractères me semble l'autorité. Cette autorité morale, qu'on sait particulière aux grands personnages du temps de Louis XIV, est singulièrement propre à ceux de Port Royal entre tous. Cette qualité, cette vertu manque tellement de nos jours aux plus grands talents, à ceux même qui en paraîtraient le plus dignes, qu'il devient précieux de l'étudier, comme dans son principe chez les maîtres."

it was the product of the principle of authority rendered classical and refined, and yet remaining purely aristocratic.

In the age of Louis XIV. the eloquence of the pulpit had arrived at a pitch it perhaps never can exceed. Bossuet and Fléchier brought to its perfection one species of the eloquence of authority. The eloquence of the judicial bench was likewise considerable, while that of the advocate hardly existed ; for the advocate had to win attention by putting himself in a position whence he could speak with authority. Consequently in France, before the days of D'Aguesseau, the French advocate began by a ponderous display of recondite learning having often no connection with the matter in hand, but inspiring those who heard him with the high respect due to a man possessed of such prodigious lore. Then when he came to the pinch of his case, he used not merely his reasoning powers, but brought to bear in favour of his client the weight of his opinion, made the more respected because his display of learning had given him a right to speak with authority. Another species of the eloquence of aristocracy was the eloquence of the Academy. The member admitted to that distinguished body was always of such great eminence, that in the discourse which it was expected that he should deliver upon his admission, he spoke as one having authority, nor needing any meretricious arts to conciliate the attention of the brilliant assemblage who came to hear his oration. He used no vehement or pathetic gestures, he aimed not to overwhelm and command attention by the rapidity of his utterance, the fluency of his words, or the harmony of his voice, but speaking as to those whom he knew would attend to him, he spoke with majesty and dignity, in courtly and polished language, the opinions which he held, and the reasons that led him to hold them. Buffon, in one of the noblest of these orations, contrasts the style of the Academy* with what he calls popular eloquence, such

* " La véritable éloquence suppose l'exercice du génie et la culture de l'esprit. Elle est bien différente de cette facilité naturelle de parler,

as that of the great orator to whom "Actio, actio, actio" is attributed as the means by which he

" Fulmin'd over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

But aristocracy and every characteristic and accompaniment of it lasted too long in France. As their literature degenerated into memoir-writing, so their academic eloquence often stooped to fulsome panegyric and flattery. While the democratic element arose, there gradually rose an animated style of impassioned oratory. The eloquence of the bar began with D'Aguesseau in the eighteenth century*; and his oratory is remarkable for combining the eloquence of an advocate with a tone of conviction inspiring respect for and giving authority to the speaker; he seems to seek to persuade only of that of which he is convinced.† Afterwards forensic eloquence partook more of the character of rhetoric; and then arose for the first time popular eloquence in France, for it was reserved to Mirabeau to find an audience whose passions he could inflame, whose reason he could lead captive by the charms of eloquence, and who, deeming themselves the equals of the speaker, and caring nothing for authority, rendered the art of the orator necessary to those who would command them. Mirabeau did not despise to address the French people with the tricks of rhetoric, for he placed before them what to him appeared the noblest of

qui n'est qu'un talent, une qualité accordée à tous ceux dont les passions sont fortes, les organes souples et l'imagination prompte. Ces hommes sentent vivement, s'affectent de même, le marquent fortement au dehors, et par une impression purement mécanique, ils transmettent aux autres leur enthousiasme et leurs affections. C'est le corps qui parle au corps; tous les mouvemens, tous les signes concourent et servent également. Que faut-il pour émouvoir la multitude et l'entraîner? Que faut-il pour ébranler la plupart des autres hommes et les persuader? Un ton véhément et pathétique, des gestes expressifs et fréquens, des paroles rapides et sonnantes."—*Discours de Buffon lors de sa réception à l'Académie Française.*

* Œuvres d'Aguesseau, i. xvi. 819.

† Ibid. i. xxii.

human achievements — the emancipation of his country; and though his immediate ancestors, the old Mirabeaus who lorded it over their native province, acted and wrote like the old Roman of the elder Cato's school, and would have despised orators, he thought it no degradation to use, in as noble a cause, the arts of Cicero and Demosthenes. He deigned to speak oratorically; and he then could so speak, because the clash of the social elements, thus striving with something like equal force, gave to France all the glory of the constitutional period, except its order, and gave to Mirabeau an excitable and impassioned audience, and that liberty which earlier ages would have denied him of inveighing with the fullest license against a monarchy too powerful for the conditions of French society. But that mere license of speech alone will make the statesmen of a nation orators is shown to be a grievous mistake by the history of many countries, and more particularly of England. In a pure aristocracy there is the most perfect license of speech among the aristocrats, yet there is never animated oratory. Many times have aristocratic dissensions produced harangues in which the most complete license of speech was exercised; but in such ages it is according to the mould and fashion of men's minds, whatever be their theoretical ideas, rather to express their opinion than to try to reason and persuade others. As Selden said of Parliament: "A man is not there to persuade other men to be of his mind, but to speak his own heart, and if it be liked, so; if not, there's an end." * And so in the collection of speeches in Parliament from 1646 to 1714 appended to the Duke of Buckingham's works, one may see that the English statesman addressed an audience not unlike that whose habits induced Lord Clarendon †, in his character of the Earl of Mansfield, to say that most men rather consider the person

* Selden's Table Talk, Tit. Parliament.

† History of the Rebellion, i. 97.

that speaks than the things he says. And the same noble author remarks how, in the debates preceding the Rebellion some great men actually kept silence from pride, "that it might appear their reputation and interest had an influence upon the sense of the house, against any rhetoric or logic." * This was indeed carrying the aristocratic scorn of showy oratory to an extreme.

It has often been said that civil commotions and great struggles of principle are necessary to call forth the highest efforts of animated oratory, and there the observation stops. We should, however, add to it that the struggles must take place at a time when men are to a great extent emancipated from the exclusive domination of aristocratic habits; when, in short, there is so much equality in the nation that those who are at the head of the great conflicting parties find it necessary to their success to convince, to please, and even to carry captive by the tricks of rhetoric. This time had arrived in Roman history when Cicero appeared. It was this crisis in Athenian history which evoked Demosthenes; and Mirabeau had died inglorious had he not lived at the juncture of French affairs when a cultivated and educated democracy thoroughly imbued with the principle of equality contended with a refined and courtly aristocracy.

In English history it was different. A civil commotion stirring more deeply the foundations of national life, invoking more aptly and with more force the aid of high and momentous principles than did our civil wars in the seventeenth century it were impossible to find in any history, and yet the stirring events of that period did not evoke a rival to Demosthenes or to Cicero. It was not a struggle against aristocracy; the habits and principles of aristocracy were deeply rooted in the mind

* Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion*, ii. 27. Goldsmith (*Works*, ed. Prior, i. 457) went so far as to say that the best orations that ever were spoken were pronounced in the Parliaments of King Charles I. The judicial style of oratory is the only one which could be to his taste.

of the nation, and the object of the Roundheads was not to establish a democratic equality—a thing then not dreamt of in this country out of the closets of the studious. Consequently, the greater speakers on either side of the question spoke like aristocrats; on the one side giving their opinion with few reasons, and no ornaments of rhetoric in favour of monarchy and high prelacy; on the other side, with equal grandeur, hauteur, and solemnity, delivering, in brief sentences full of majestic self-reliance, their opinions against monarchs, courts, and gorgeous priests.

As our national progress advanced the importance of individual men decreased. Adventurers found their way into Parliament who appealed to the reason of their audience, and exposed and refuted the arguments by which the old statesmen professed to have convinced themselves. Animated oratory thus became necessary in self-defence; and in the latter half of the last century it first appeared in England. We had then both conditions—liberty of speech, and sufficient personal equality to make it necessary for statesmen not merely to state their own opinion, but also to try to convince others by argument, though the influence of position and character was still great. We had also a cultivated aristocracy still ruling, who delighted in literature, and were proud themselves to practise this, the literature of politics. Much of that glory, and for the same reasons, still remains to us; and still so much of the old habit of regarding the character of the speaker (though our ideas of what is a good character are very different), that even profound and subtle arguments do not make much way in our senate, unless the speaker is believed sincerely to entertain the views he supports. One class of men labour under the most unjust suspicions in this respect. The members of the Bar make the most argumentative speeches in the House of Commons, but the rest of the house never divest themselves of the ungenerous idea that the barrister is speaking from

a brief; and therefore the lawyers whose ability would entitle them to the most weight, have, as a body, the least in the House of Commons. It is curious that the same men in the House of Lords, when judges, and no longer in the habit of holding briefs, obtain that influence which they ought to have possessed in the House of Commons. Their style of speaking in the Upper House is more judicial and solemn than in the Lower; and the age and long experience, as well as the official dignity of the judges, contribute to give them, then more sedate in their tone and less zealous in the support of their party, an influence wanting to them in the hot days of their forensic struggles. Our time listened to one orator who commanded universal attention though destitute of every grace of oratory. The Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords was the precise and only representative of a true aristocratic statesman. When he rose, silence immediately followed, nor ceased till he had delivered in a few short sentences his well-considered opinion upon the matter in debate. He made no rhetorical flights; he hardly descended to argument; as a speaker, in the artistic sense of the term, he deserved no reputation; but the weight of his character, and the universal worship that men paid to his wisdom, gave him and his rude ill-formed speech that enormous influence which in earlier ages people allowed to the equally inartistic, brief, and rugged dicta of the old aristocratic statesmen. In pure democracies, which are absolute governments, there is no room for true orators. The only statesmen who then make a reputation by speaking are those who, sailing on the current of events, provide arguments and reasons to justify the passions of the majority; who, in short, pick out the best parts of their employer's case, like advocates of the bar. In modern days, the writers of leading articles perform this function; and orators exist in no democracy of the present day, nor have existed for any length of time in any country where the democratic element is substantially

supreme. The orators of our democratic element have no personal influence. When they supply reason to passion they call down applause; but let them utter one sentiment contrary to their employers' views and they go to the dogs at once. Mr. Cobden was strong upon free trade, he is impotent upon anything else. Mr. Bright is cheered to the echo in a reform meeting. When he speaks for reform and its accompaniments how would he fare there if he gave reasons against the ballot? and yet, in an artistic point of view Mr. Bright is no mean orator. There were orators in America when there was a great and noble struggle for freedom, but at present the race seems extinct, although there is no country which talks more.

This is my explanation of the presence of oratory among the statesmen at the constitutional period in the career of each nation, and its absence at other periods. Perhaps some readers will, at the moment of reading this, be in the belief that they have discovered a fallacy. I have said that the influence of the speakers in aristocratic states of society depends on character; and yet it is notorious that some of the most prominent and powerful aristocratic statesmen have been atrocious villains and were well known to their hearers to be such.

To explain this must be explored a dark and unholy cavern, lying amid the deepest foundations of human nature; that cavern in whose inmost recesses we perform the secret rite of worship to a fellow-creature. For what is the idol before whom we there prostrate ourselves in the twilight of the reason? It wears a Janus-head,—one side made in the image of God, the other in the image of the Devil; and in proportion as the Godlike face is most expressive of what is most good and holy, so often, in that same proportion, the other face bears a resemblance, bolder and more marked than in ordinary instances, to its prototype. The tapers of that worship are ever burning; the altar steps are ever pressed by kneeling

crowds, as they pass through this transitory life ; but as the worshippers descend to the cavern with passions and prejudices ever differing, so the idol which each troop places on the vacant altar receives but the homage of those who placed it ; and when they have left, is cast down to make room for the idol of the next comer.

Whoever, in the earlier aristocratic ages, would occupy the shrine must be brave*—for that is of the essence of an aristocracy — frank to his dependants, hospitable and trustworthy by those to whom he has pledged his word ; he must rule his conduct according to what he believes to be right, however bad that conduct may be according to the views of other times and other nations. The merely doing what he believes to be right is sufficient to give him the self-respecting, self-reliant bearing which added to his position as one of the superior race will entitle him to this idolatry. So much for one of his faces — that which is turned towards the worshippers. He wears another, of the existence of which they are perfectly conscious, but—without any deception or concealment on the part of the idol — the worshippers refuse to regard it. For this he may be vindictive, cruel, insolent, cunning, and may commit, almost with the frequency of habit, acts which another age would consider base and disgraceful. The worshippers know of all these arts and vices, but notwithstanding these, provided that he profess the virtues which they require, they will adore him for a demigod, and give weight to his opinions. In aristocratic ages, when position gives prominence and influence to the members of the superior race, they by mere force of circumstances acquire a largeness of character, a certain greatness of soul and majesty of motion, which not only develope and make more conspicuous their virtues, and their reputed virtues, but

* It has been remarked of the times of Henry IV. of France, when the scene was crowded with what were then great men, that the historian can find only three virtues then in existence : courage, friendship, and filial obedience.—*Smyth's Lectures on Modern History*, i. 300.

amplify those passions and give strength to those habits for which posterity, but not their contemporaries, condemn them. What Cardinal de Retz observes of Richelieu is true of most human beings. Each of their great qualities is the result or the cause of some great defeat. These warrior aristocrats move upon the stage of life like the persons of a tragedy, stirred by great emotions to good and to evil, so as to make the same man appear to all ages a great hero, and to others than his own a great villain. He does acts exceeding in generosity and nobleness the acts of the men who live after him, but he proceeds rather on sudden impulses than from fixed principles of regard or sympathy towards the individuals, or from a determination never to act otherwise than nobly and generously; and in the boldness of his spirit, when the bad is aroused within him—it may be by those to whom he has before been noble and generous, but who in thwarting some little end, exasperate him—he resorts to no petty arts of evasive trickery, but startles by the unrelenting atrocity of his vengeance those who are not blinded, nor have, like many, their admiration captivated by the open daring and bravery of the deed. Lord Bacon, a notable example of the combination of good and evil, says*: “Those that are first raised to nobility are commonly more virtuous but less innocent than their descendants,” an observation true not only of those raised in their own persons to nobility, but of the nobles who live in the ages when nobility itself is recent.

In Froissart and Philippe de Comines this species of worship is wonderfully conspicuous. They wrote, kneeling in the cavern of hero idolatry. They were fully aware of the bad in their idol, they record with minuteness his vices and his crimes. In short, they show both faces of their Janus, but neither of these writers—and in this respect they but reflect the spirit of their age—speaks a word of disparagement, or qualifies his lofty eulogies, or even seems himself to think the worse of the subject of his narrative

* Essay of Nobility.

because of vices or of crimes, if only that subject is a being who however bad in other respects fulfils the conditions of the hero-worship of the day. I do not think that the vices and crimes of the heroes, though known to the people of those ages, were looked upon by them as subjects of censure. As in the Greek and Latin languages, and among our Germanic ancestors, there was the same word for "good" and for "aristocratic;" the "good" men were the noble men, the "bad" men were the ignoble men.* So let the nation but place the superior race upon this altar, and all their attributes are good and commendable; the ethical line between good and bad is the line between the idol and the worshipper. As a nation advances, the prevailing character of the superior race remains long the model of the virtuous character, and it is possible for a member of the superior race to forfeit respect if he differs from the prevailing character of his fellows—the character which entitles them to their hero-worship. When I say, therefore, that in aristocratic ages, the influence of a speaker depends mainly upon his character, I mean that it depends upon his possessing the qualities which raise him to this shrine of hero-worship. He must have the good side of the Janus face, and if he possesses that his vices are immaterial. Let such a man arise in the scene painted by Virgil, and he has no need of the rhetorician's exordium to gain the opinion and the affection of his audience; his mere rising will calm the tumult, and the words which he utters carry persuasion if only because they are his—

—“*Magno in populo quum sæpe coorta est
Seditio, sævitque animis ignobile vulgus;
Jamque faces et saxa volant, furor arma ministrat:
Tum, pietate gravem ac meritis si forte virum quem
Conspexêre, silent, arrectisque auribus astant:
Ille regit dictis animos, et pectora mulcet.*”

* See this well illustrated in Grote, iii. 62, note; and Welcher's prolegomena to his edition of Theognis.

In less rugged and more refined aristocracies there is not so much of the bold bluff honesty of the older aristocrats, but the conditions of the beau-ideal are still of the same type. Montesquieu tells us what was required of the French aristocrat; and Lord Chesterfield* sends that list of virtues and vices to his son, to form himself upon them. The great man must have noble virtues, a frank character, and a polite bearing. Beauty rather than goodness, grandeur rather than justice, striking originality rather than good sense, were required of him in action. For this he might indulge in gaming, drinking, and adultery; he might resort to trickery and deception when united with the idea that his soul was yet lofty, or the affairs he had in hand important. So that the finesses which would have been mean and degrading in private life or for small ends, were admired in the grand and lofty sphere of politics.

Thus men worship in aristocratic ages, and those who fulfil the conditions of their idolatry, however deficient they may be in many of the first requisites of true virtue, can stand upon that altar of hero-worship, and from it command their fellows. And by means of this, aristocratic statesmen, provided only that they possess the qualities necessary to those who would ascend that altar, may acquire their enormous personal power, unaffected by office, unchanged by adversity. The philosopher of the nineteenth century despises these idols and their worshippers, but he worships too in that cavern. His idols are different, dare we hope that they are better?

When the conditions of this worship change, when later generations carry with them other idols to that altar, when this, the simplest avenue of the human soul, is closed, the man who by speech would command the nation must obtain another vantage ground than that from which the old statesmen addressed their audience. The speaker

* Letter cxcvi.

then must have studied deeply the knowledge of men, he must possess a pleasing elocution, a graceful but unstudied action, an elegance of person and of style, an animated countenance, a sonorous and flexible voice, a great command of harmonious expression, a quick imagination, and above all, an earnestness of tone and manner, which is the principal means of transmitting enthusiasm and passion. He must begin with an exordium to gain the affections of his audience ; and having by such art obtained something of that favourable standing with them that the old aristocrats possessed without resort to art, he must do more than they were bound to do : he must address the reason of his audience, so as to make them, with apparent spontaneity, come to his conclusion, and be able to say, after they have done it, that they so concluded for such and such reasons ; and not let them feel what is, in truth, generally the case — that they have been led captive by their passions, aroused and swayed by his oratorical tricks, just as they were formerly overawed by the authority of the old speakers ; and that reason has next to nothing to do with their vote.

Thus as personal preeminence declines, oratory increases. Oratory is one of the means by which, in constitutional countries, new men rise to the ranks of statesmen, and the rise of these new men alters the character of the class into which they enter.

CHAP. XII.

THE NATIONAL ACME.—THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIAL
ELEMENTS.

"As the most perfect life is that which animates the most complex organisation, so that state is the noblest in which powers, originally and definitely distinct, unite after the varieties of their kind into centres of vitality, one beside the other, to make up a whole."—NIEBUHR.

As in the schools of anatomy, when the knife of the professor lays open, for our instruction, the organism of the human body, we are first enlightened upon the elements of the outward beauty—the skin, the eyes, the hair—and the knife cuts but slightly, and only to show how these and familiar members are connected with, and derive their sustenance and their peculiarities from the inward members, which we never see in life, and it is not till after all this has been explained and understood that the deeper incisions commence, and the vitals are laid bare; so I have endeavoured, seizing upon the foreign glory of nations in their acme, their literature, their oratory, and their forms of statesmanship, which are, as it were, the outward signs and cuticle of national life, to portray and to examine these alone, and only slightly to open the delicate fibres and nerves by which they are connected with the interior organisation; but now the time has arrived when, if ever it can be done, the mainsprings of the life of nations must be probed and exposed. Bear with me, if I do it in a fragmentary and unpretended way. The

anatomy of the human body is yet far from being completely known, after three thousand years of study. How can the anatomy of the social body be fully understood in the first lecture-room established for its exposition?

Each of the social forces contributes its quota to the greatness of the nation in which it is present, and the measure of national greatness is given by the number of social forces which contribute to it, and the harmony in which they and their gifts unite; if they are all present, and all have their due rank and power in a nation, then is the development of that nation the realisation of the ideal, and a national development is rendered imperfect by the absence or undue prominence of any one or more of these forces. For, suppose any one of them eliminated*, the progress of the other elements would not, as a certain consequence, be stayed, the development would not necessarily be made to cease; but when the nation comes to the acme, the period in which there is no supremacy among the various elements, and where the greater the number of elements developed the greater the national splendour it is clear that by the deficiency of one or more the general effect is modified.

In a complete development it is necessary that the three secular elements—the monarchical, the aristocratical, and the democratical—should co-exist.

Philosophers of great and merited reputation have taken each of the three cardinal forms of government separately, and assigned to it a principle. There is this difference, says Montesquieu, between the nature of a government and its principle: its nature is that which makes it what it is; its principle, that which regulates its action. The one is its individual structure; the other, the human passions which move it. The same illustrious writer distinguished the principle of republics, meaning thereby both aristocracies and democracies, to be virtue, that is, love and

* The reader may refer to the scheme on p. 96.

regard for the republic; to monarchical government he assigned the principle of honour; and to despotism, fear.

Honour is the principle of aristocratic monarchies, because it is the ruling principle of the unconquered founders of nations. It prevails as much among the populations where there has been no conquest, like the Norwegian, as among the conquering tribe which becomes an aristocracy, but it does not prevail among the conquered. Those who live by the rule of honour never commit an act, which the opinion of the men whom they esteem would condemn. If by some happy dispensation the abstract rule of right made itself perceptible to all, and guided opinion, the life of those who live according to the law of honour would exemplify the perfection of human conduct. But the opinions of right among mankind vary continually, and those, therefore, who rule their life by the law of honour, not unfrequently pursue a system of action which calls forth the surprise and the censure of succeeding ages.*

Honour is the effect of deference to the opinion of a class, whom we have previously enshrined in our hearts as the models of feeling and of conduct. I hold it to be a mistake to lay down, as some have done, that it can only exist where there are social equalities, though it is perfectly true that when the aristocratic feelings die out of a nation, the spirit of honour perishes likewise. But honour was a ruling principle among the Scottish Highlanders in their days of predatory warfare, not binding merely on chieftains, but on every clansman; it existed among some of the nobler tribes of the American Indians,

* The philosopher of utility, taking the law of honour as established among the more refined nobilities of Europe in the eighteenth century, expresses his sense of the sins, religious and moral, not thereby chastised. Paley, *Moral Philosophy*, bk. i. ch. 2. See Coleridge, *The Friend*, iii. 94; and De Tocqueville, *Dém. en Amér.*, vol. iv. ch. 18. Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, Remark (R.) Mandeville, *Inquiry into the Origin of Honour*.

and exists at this day in Norway, where all men have the feeling of aristocrats, though they have no class below them. The mistake seems to have arisen from the greater prominence of the rule of honour where there is social inequality, for there it draws a line not less marked than that of birth and property between the aristocrat and the *roturier*. The higher classes fix their mind upon certain qualities, which they repute honourable and worthy of the men of their race, such as courage *, hospitality, frankness, a scorn of servile labour. These are the characteristics of the more valiant tribes out of whom aristocracies are formed, and long continue to be the characteristics cultivated by their descendants. Those who fail in them are held to be unworthy members of a military aristocracy. Among the subjects there is not the same strict rule of conduct, their errors, except when penal consequences ensue, do not degrade their condition lower than it was before, and the opinion of their fellows acts with less force upon them, since they are not always masters of their actions. They have it scarce in their power to be hospitable; courage is for the stronger race, servile labour is their lot; and they can hardly condemn if one of their number seeks to overreach by craft those who oppress him by force.

Thus honour, when there is inequality of conditions, belongs especially to the aristocracy. As national progress advances, the views of the aristocracy respecting what is honourable alter †, but they never lose, so long

* Courage is the first and most vital principle of honour in aristocracies. *Virtus* meant originally manfulness and courage, which, at the time when the Roman language was formed, was regarded as the chief, if not the only virtue. The whole character of the great Romans is summed up in the sentence of Livy, "Et facere et pati fortia Romanum est."

† The changeableness of the code makes honour one of the easiest things for authors to dogmatise about, each including or excluding some quality from the list, according to his taste. Thus, the author of the treatise, "Laconics, or New Maxims of State and Conversation," (2nd

as they are a distinct class, the feeling that honour ought to be their guiding principle. It comes in such an aristocracy as that of France under the later Bourbons, to be at last a rule of fashion, allowing all the sins of the decalogue, but requiring a strict observance of certain established forms of gentlemanly intercourse. In that country every attribute of aristocracy, which was allowed to continue its sway long after other elements were fitted to share that sway with it, has run to an absurd excess, and French "honour," of which their military men are eternally talking, seems to amount only to the rule of summoning to mortal combat any one who gives their irritable vanity the least offence. In constitutional countries honour remains the principle of the aristocracy, and if the points of honour are solid and substantial virtues, and not flimsy bye-laws of etiquette, their influence over the public mind is one of incalculable benefit. A manly self-reliant class spreads through the nation a manliness of character which would not otherwise be attained. In England especially, the principle of honour has acted not merely upon the aristocracy, in the strict sense of the term, but upon all who can pretend to the name of gentlemen; for till lately there were few gentlemen, whether at the bar or in the counting-house, whose misconduct would not have dishonoured an ancient house, tarnished a respected name, or prevented their entering that class, to enter which was their highest aspiration.

Honour, which is in its essence a due respect for oneself and for one's order, when observed by the higher classes, inspires respect for them in the lower; and it is this principle of respect by which is mainly manifested the modified and beneficial influence exercised by an

edit. Lond. 1702, part ii. No. 484,) says, "A man without religion can have no honour." What would the atheistic noblesse of France, who were all honourable men, according to their idea of honour, have said to this?

aristocracy after the original distinction between conquerors and conquered remains only in remote tradition. The higher classes in a well-ordered constitutional government respect their own character and reputation; and the principles and feelings which are handed down to them as heirlooms induce them to think themselves not vainly the prop and mainstay of the state. That prompts them to what is considered honourable conduct, and they place before their inferiors examples of straightforward dealing and considerate generosity; they cherish a respectful devotion * to the commonwealth, and serve it: that is conservatism in its best aspect, and they receive from those whom fortune has placed below them the respect which is ever elicited, even involuntarily, by honourable conduct, by generous temper, and by the untarnished inheritance of an illustrious name. This spreads through the nation a sentiment of order, fidelity, frankness, and respect, which is totally wanting where there are no classes but such as are imbued with the characteristics of commercial democracies †; as the character of the aristocrats declines, their power and prestige rapidly vanishes. There is no honour to a name that is disgraced by him who bears it; there is no respect for him who does not respect himself. There is no affection for the landlord of whom the tenant knows nothing but his signature to rent receipts. The power of an aristocracy, when it has laid aside the mere rule of the sword, and assumes to retain its preeminence in a nation which will not obey without scrutiny, nor yield respect where it is not due, depends entirely upon the character of the members of its order. Are they of lofty views, of honourable feelings, of frank and open-hearted bearing? then they spread through the whole country

* This is the "virtue" which Montesquieu establishes as the leading principle both of aristocracies and democracies.

† Plutocrats have no badge of honour to distinguish them from those who differ from them, only in being poorer.

a height of character which perhaps under other systems it is impossible to attain. Are they degraded and unworthy of their traditions? then not merely do they set bad examples, but they are speedily deposed from their preeminence. None have such great inducements to maintain the extreme of rectitude as the heads of noble houses; and nowhere is a stain more visible, or more condemned, than upon a peer's ermine. It has been remarked *, that the long and glorious duration of the Roman republic was due to the exalted character of a few great families, who transmitted pure and unmixed to their descendants the principles which first made the Roman name famous among the nations. "Such free states," says Niebuhr †, "as are not mere aggregates of individuals, changing their character and sentiments with every outward impression and momentary impulse, owe this steadiness mainly to the subsistence of houses and corporations in which principles and feelings are transmitted for ages as an heirloom from generation to generation. . . . The life of a house in the republic was like that of one man: the descendant received the principles of his ancestor as a law, and his plans as a trust that he was charged to execute." ‡ Nor is English history devoid of a similar glory. As soon as that glory departs, the principles of our constitution will no longer find materials to work with. Burke, in 1772, addressing the head of an illustrious house §, wrote thus: "You people of great families, and hereditary trusts and fortunes, are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavour, yet still are but annual plants that perish with our season,

* Burke's Correspondence, i. 382.

† Hist. Rom. i. 376.

‡ See also Niebuhr, Hist. Rom. iv. 331.

§ To the Duke of Richmond; Correspondence, i. 381.

and leave no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. The immediate power of a Duke of Richmond, or a Marquis of Rockingham, is not so much of moment; but if their conduct and example hand down their principles to their successors, then their houses become the public repositories and offices of record for the constitution,—not like the Tower, or Rolls Chapel, where it is searched for and sometimes in vain, in rotten parchments, under dripping and perishing walls, but in full vigour, and acting with vital energy and power in the character of the leading men and natural interests of the country.” “*Antiquitatem etiam in monumentis veneramur; quanto magis in vivis?*” *

Honour being thus the principle of feudal aristocracies in the days of their uncorrupted sway, honour is likewise the principle of the feudal monarchy, which in its origin is but a part of the aristocracy. The monarch, elected for the purpose of consolidation and union, represents in his person the idea of a united nation. It is his lofty function to guard its honour, to advance its interests, and to conciliate the conflicting aristocrats from whom he springs. The tyrant or despot, who governs by functionalism, has a more difficult and less graceful task. On him and his clique devolves the whole of government; he is looked upon by all as an evil, by most as a necessary evil. He has no faithful clan, bound by affection and respect, like the aristocrat who is elevated to the throne; but he must pick out from the mass below him the most acute, the most subservient, the most manageable functionaries; and as for the protection of his person, he commits that, not like the monarch, to his trusty followers, or to aristocrats who have chosen and sworn to obey him, but to native slaves or foreign hirelings.

Grandeur is a leading element in the character of aris-

* Bacon, *Antitheta on Nobility*.

tocracies—grandeur in its etymological sense. It is not a petty motive that can set them in action. They move only for large reasons, on great impulses, and on views of lofty and extensive character, which lead to mighty consequences. Great size is next akin to vagueness; and when once set in movement to accomplish some large achievement, little thought is taken of the varied, and too often not noble means which must be employed to reach success; and so, though aristocracies rarely place before themselves base objects, we find them not seldom committing base actions, for they plough their way onwards with their wild wandering vision, their rough insensible frames, and their impetuous headstrong minds, that will not stay their progress to calculate the objections to the course they are pursuing, and though the goal to which they tend is one worthy to be struggled for by men of honour, the furrow to it violates the sanctuary of many a noble principle, which they would not wittingly invade.

This largeness, and at the same time vagueness, by which the movements of aristocracies are characterised, pervades the whole mind of the nation in the ages of aristocratic power. Those who think, think largely and comprehensively. They more often guess than reason with minute precision, but theirs are the guesses of genius, and they more often reach the truth by reason that they more resemble, and can better read the grand and comprehensive mind of the Creator, than the small but more precise understanding of later and mechanical ages. The deductive habit of mind is that which leads to the greatest discoveries; deduction is but the guessing of genius, which afterwards is verified by experiment; and thus in the earlier part of the national acme, while the aristocratic habit of mind still exercises a most powerful influence, have lived the great theoretical men of science, the master minds who have made the greatest discoveries in practical science. Newton and Kepler put mathematics on a new basis. Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, Quesnay,

*and so rather
the induction
by hypothesis
to be tested by
experiment*

Turgot, founded political economy, while aristocracy pervaded the social, and metaphysics the mental atmosphere.

In later ages, when the democratic employments have transfused through the nation a habit of minute, precise, and accurate mental processes, induction thrives, and crowds of intelligent and acute men, pursuing the method of inductive reasoning, apply and work out in detail the great and comprehensive principles roughly discovered in the old days of aristocracy, but they do not add to the number of these comprehensive discoveries. The United States, for instance, have not discovered a single one of the general laws of mechanics, but they have introduced a new machine into navigation, which has changed the face of the world. So that while, in one sense, democratic ages are the ages of science, in another sense, the aristocratic ages are those in which science accomplishes its noblest and most striking achievements.

The contributions of aristocracy to the national acme are, it will ever be remembered, not necessarily contributions of the aristocrats themselves, but contributions which are due to the institution of aristocracy, and the tone and habits of mind which belong to countries where aristocracy is established. Thus literature, though an aristocratic production, is the work of men not born to a high estate; and science, still more, is the offspring of the humble.

Aristocracy alone never has made, and never will make, a national acme. It requires the development of the best qualities of the democratic element to enable the nation to reach its acme. What are those qualities?

The most prominent is energy;—a most sacred and vital quality, without which no nation has ever reached prosperity, wealth, and renown. How often is it said of individuals, who by industry and ability have been the architects of their own fortunes, that if it had not been for the privations and sorrows of their early lives, the pressure of the *res angusta domi*, or the stern denials of

unsympathising parents, the energy which made them great would not have been called forth, and they would have remained respectable but unhonoured members of the crowd. And if this is a true explanation, as it no doubt most often, though not always is, of the causes of individual efforts, it affords an analogy most true and most instructive of the causes of national progress.

Among all the nations of the world, I know not that any one has ever emerged from obscurity unless it had been goaded to extraordinary exertions, either by the pressure and exactions of a feudal aristocracy, or by the poverty and barrenness of the soil. If a people are settled on a soil sufficiently fertile to provide them with their simple wants, if no exacting lords rule over them, if population does not increase so rapidly as to compel them to change their mode of getting sustenance, then what have we but Bœotians, Norwegians, Danes, as they have been since they outrooted aristocracy; happy, it may be,—perhaps of a happiness surpassing that of great and renowned nations, as the ignoble crowd of easy-living people generally exceed in happiness those who have risen from ambition; simple and honest, it may be, and deserving of all respect upon that score; religious and moral, it may be, after a primitive, uninquiring, confiding fashion; but without energy, without sufficient principle of action to urge them, or any part of them, to great achievements; and so somnolent and doggedly determined not to deviate from the established rut, that if the world consisted of such people alone the torch of human knowledge, invention, discovery, creation, had, when scarce lighted, burnt out for want of air and movement to feed it.

It will be found that every nation which has reached its acme has either been exposed, like England, France, Rome, Tuscany, to the pressure and exactions of a feudal aristocracy, or, like the Venetians and the Carthaginians, been driven by their barren and inhospitable soil, or too confined territory, to seek by other means than its cul-

ture, the food which it denies them ; or, like the Athenians and the Dutch, been goaded by both causes at once to the exertions which have founded the national greatness. For greatness, be it of nations or of individuals, comes not of ease and plenty, but is the fruit of the brow's sweat and the soul's deep anguish.

Let us mark well this distinction, for it is of consummate importance. There is no history of Bœotia, no history of Norway, no history of Switzerland, because there is nothing to relate. Sometimes, in defence of their country, a noble and heroic effort is achieved. Let Epaminondas and William Tell have all their honour, but of the nation there is no history because there is no progress. They live, generation after generation, in the same ancestral homesteads, the seasons bring the only change that occurs in their employments, and each recurring year finds them not richer, not wiser ; but as simple, as contented, as happy as before. Theirs is a picture giving delight to those who view it, like the calm beauty of a still summer's day. But out of storm, and floods, and tumult ; out of sorrows and privations, by constant toil and desperate adventures, in despite of frowning skies, rugged earth, and brigand nobles, come the great achievements and solid national greatness which alone are due to the energy and endurance of a democratic element, thwarted and lashed into desperate action.

How begins the history of nations whose development has been the least imperfect ? For a long time it consists of nothing but tales of ambition, strife, love, revenge, animating the breasts of a few aristocrats, and urging them to noble efforts and to great crimes. The scenes are tragic, the emotions deep, the actions arduous and of great import ; the actors few, and all belonging to the class of conquerors ; the ignoble many never come before the audience, except to raise their shout on behalf of one of the noble rivals, adding glory to his triumph, and by their presence, silent of articulate speech, voteless and

impotent to affect the destinies of the great, impressing the spectator with the contrasted grandeur and distinction of the heroes with whose struggles, victories, and defeats history is then solely employed.

After a while the historian stays his progress in this narrative of personal conflicts among the conquerors, and lights up, though but for a few brief moments, the crowd of the conquered. He tells how the mass of them still adhere to individual families of the barons, on whose land they were bred, they live, and they must die; while some few of them, scorning this servile stagnation, or lashed beyond endurance by the cruelty and avarice of the baron to whose estates they belong, fleeing from their homes to little centres of humble industry, seek protection of the loftiest of the barons, their elected head, and, obtaining from him a charter, transfer their allegiance from their old lords to their lords' king.

The light is turned off, and we hear no more of them for a long time; the family feuds, the tales of personal achievements, full of poetry and romance, continue to absorb all our interest. At last, through some coincidence, the whole of these foremost actors are ranged into two hostile ranks, nearly equally matched, and then instead of, as before, fighting it out among themselves, and only after the fight calling in the people to tell them who is their new master, they call them in while the fight is yet going on, to assist in determining its issue.

Then we are told how, since we last heard of them, these little chartered towns, hated of all nobles, had grown to power and importance; how their walls were well fortified, their treasure-houses well stored, their citizens skilful in arts and free in spirit, and now once fairly invoked as persons having a share in the arbitrement of political destinies, they are never lost sight of again, but the two contending factions of the aristocracy court their favour and invoke their arms.

All our commercial greatness, all that energy and spirit

which has made England what it is, all that restlessness of mind which leads to inventions and improvements both social and physical, we owe, in their rude origin, to the villains who were driven by aristocratic oppression to earn their bread by handicrafts and trades. In French history, and, though perhaps in a less degree still, in our history also, these townsmen bore about them the taint of their origin from the subject race. It is easy to imagine that conquerors, not remarkable for their sympathy with the serfs whom they had reduced to subjection, would like those serfs still less when, betaking themselves to towns, they became free citizens; and the word villain has derived its present meaning from the scorn of the castle for the town.* The Abbé Guibert† called the royal charters of community a new and wicked device to procure liberty to slaves, and encourage them in shaking off the dominion of their masters; and by the English feudal law the superior lord was prohibited from marrying his female ward to a burgess or a villain. The serfs were like released prisoners, who still wore their prison dress.

And if from this state of society we turn to the present, when Birmingham can carry a Reform bill and Manchester remove the tax from corn, and ask what has raised this new power in the state—how have these villains and serfs come to dictate to their natural lords? The simple answer is, that trade and manufactures have raised them to be an independent power. “When I have been upon the ‘Change,” says Addison‡, “I have often fancied one of

* “Quant à ceux, qui, n’ayant point de demeure seigneuriale, habitaient pêle-mêle à la manière Romaine, dans les villes et dans les hameaux, ils tiraient de cette circonstance un nom spécial qui remplaça leur ancien nom de peuple; on les appelait *villains*, et ce nom donné à un *homme-franc*, eût été pour lui le plus cruelle injurie.”—*Thierry, Conquête d’Angl.* i. 161. Villains, of course, meant originally the inhabitants of the towns (called in mediæval Latin, *villæ*).

† Guibert Abbat. de Vitâ suâ, lib. iii. c. 7, apud Script. rer. Francic. t. xii.

‡ Spectator, No. lxix.

our old kings standing in person, where he is represented in effigy, and looking down upon the wealthy concourse of people with which that place is every day filled. In this case, how would he be surprised to hear all the languages of Europe spoken in this little spot of his former dominions, and to see so many private men, who in his time should have been the vassals of some powerful baron, negotiating, like princes, for greater sums of money than were formerly to be met with in the royal treasury. Trade, without enlarging the British territories, has given us a kind of additional empire; it has multiplied the number of the rich, made our landed estates infinitely more valuable than they were formerly, and added to them an accession of other estates as valuable as the lands themselves."

Sagacious legislators have not lost sight of this effect of commerce and manufactures, when it suited their ends to prevent it. The Spartan system, which provided for the maintenance of the aristocratic power by decreeing that the whole of the dominant races should live in a state of perpetual military training, likewise expressly forbade trade and manufactures. The natural consequence of which prohibition was that the *περίοικοι* never rose to be an independent body in the state, nor till the final break up of the nation obtained the slightest share of power. The Austrian and Spanish governments in Italy, moved by the like considerations, have sedulously encouraged agriculture, because it is an occupation which, by spreading men over large surfaces of country, impedes their intercourse; by preserving them in health, fosters a state of stolid content, and in the observation of nature affords a ready occupation for any superfluity of mental energy which, in towns, might more likely be directed, by sickly and over-worked artisans, to the observations of the vices of their superiors (a fertile theme), and the concoction of schemes for their own advancement. Had the Etruscan Lucu-

mones* equally forbidden to the inhabitants of their subject cities the manufacture of the beautiful works of art which still, in such numbers, excite our admiration, their tenure of power might have been longer, but less renowned.

Royalty in its contests with aristocracy has always looked with favour on the employments which raised a power in the State strong enough to rival the noblesse. Frederick the Great partly from this reason, and partly inspired by the wish to have a kingdom perfect and complete in all its parts, took every means, not so much to encourage as to force trade and manufactures.† His ill success in that endeavour, and the failure of the late Sultan and Mahomet Ali to establish manufactures in Turkey and Egypt, may teach ambitious sovereigns that other circumstances besides royal favour are required to turn a nation of agriculturists or of warriors into one of traders and manufacturers; for it seems by a curious dispensation, that the good of democracy is evoked either by the evil of aristocracy or the evil of the soil. There must be one of these two causes to drive the mass of the population into the activity and toil requisite for trade and manufactures, but when once that energy is aroused and wealth begun to be accumulated, then in the direct ratio in which commerce increases, liberty increases, for commerce

* Niebuhr (H. R. i. 130) feared a vigorous opposition when he made out that the Etruscan works in bronze and clay and bas-reliefs were produced, not by the military noblesse, but by the subject artizans. I know not whether he was opposed; but if he was, it must have been by the first person who has attributed handicraft trades to a military noblesse.

† L'Abbé Coyer, in 1757, wrote, "Une grande monarchie, telle que la nôtre (the French), peut et doit avoir tous les esprits, celui de l'agriculture, celui des lettres et des arts, celui de la guerre et du commerce. Rien de tout cela ne se combat. Au contraire c'est de l'union de toutes ses forces que résulte la force générale. La Pologne gémit sous l'esprit tout militaire qui la gouverne. La Prusse toute guerrière fait tous ses efforts pour devenir commerçante."—*Noblesse Commerçante*, i. 148.

brings forward into wealth and prominence a class of tradesmen and merchants who, aware of the necessity of a central government, are often willing to retain royalty, while they oppose with the utmost inveteracy the power of the nobles, which when at the strongest renders property insecure, and live in their towns after they have collected their little independence to be free from the feudal exactions of the noblesse.*

This is the democratic element of a nation in its origin. It is a twin brother of commerce and handicrafts, and is throughout its independent existence distinguished by the energy which, in fact, formed it into a separate element, an energy always devoted principally, and when uncontrolled by other elements, entirely to the culture of the useful arts and the exact sciences, but, which under the direction and inspiration of an aristocracy produces the classical language and literature of the nation, and with the encouragement of a plutocracy produces its school of painting and the arts which minister to a refined luxury.

Taking, however, the energy of democracy in its most racy form, it is energy devoted to utility; and it is this which at the national acme stands out in bold relief, as the contribution of the democratic element furnished not by the assistance or encouragement, but in spite of the opposition of the other social elements; and then it is that we hear the contrast so often drawn between honour and utility, chivalry and calculation. Commercial democracies have no such thing as honour in the sense in which aristocracies understand it. They treat honour as synonymous with honesty, and with them everything not against the laws of the land or the customs of trade is honourable. This characteristic is remarkable in the

* Under the old régime in France almost all the middle classes lived in towns for this reason. See De Tocqueville, *L'Ancient Régime*, p. 139.

views taken by the Carthaginian republic* and some existing nations. The United States as they are the sole instance of a pure democracy, so they are the most conspicuous for abolishing all notions of honour as anything beyond honesty.† In nations where the aristocratic and democratic elements exist contemporaneously, the opposite notions belonging to these elements respectively produce as their joint result a moderate, and sometimes inconsistent, view; and it is instructive to trace the conflict of two notions so diametrically opposed. It was the continued decrease of the principle of honour and respect, and the advance of the principle of utility, which at a particular juncture of affairs seemed to Burke to be out-rooting the principle of aristocratic honour, and led him to make his famous exclamation, "The age of chivalry is gone, that of sophisters and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever." England, however, yet retains much of its old chivalrous feelings, not by any means confined to its aristocracy, but permeating through the population, and affecting even its modern calculators. Each contributes to her glory;—the former by the means, the latter by the end. Honour has often been ridiculous, because its ends were ridiculous; utility has sometimes been censurable because its means were not honourable. Perfection lies in the combination where utility is the end, and honour is regarded in the means.

We have then in England the Crown as the representative of the national unity and glory; the noblesse, the upholders of respect and honour; the Commons the promoters of utility. Of these three principles acting har-

* Niebuhr, H. R. iv. 109.

† "L'Américain appelle noble et estimable ambition ce que nos pères du moyen-âge nommaient cupidité servile, de même qu'il donne le nom de fureur aveugle et barbare à l'ardeur conquérante et à l'humeur guerrière qui les jettaient chaque jour dans de nouveaux combats."—De Tocqueville, *Dém. en Amérique*, iv. 149.

moniously must constitutional monarchy be formed. I know no more gorgeous spectacle than a great nation, which contains within it the splendour of monarchy, the proud dignity of the patrician spirit, and the restless activity of the commercial. If there should be found a nation where the throne was occupied by one of the softer sex, who, descended from a long line of illustrious sovereigns, might claim by prescriptive right the homage due to the crown, but has no occasion to do so because that homage is freely and heartily offered by a nation which, remarkable at all times for its loyalty, is still more remarkable for the respectful affection which it always shows to a female sovereign who reigns—not to lead forth armies, not to interfere in civil contests, but into a court surrounded by territorial nobles admits the honoured representatives of industry ; and, raised above the paltry prejudices of class, dispenses the royal patronage to genius, to learning, to invention, to everything that redounds to the greatness of the empire at home or its high name abroad, a queen who occupies the throne as the impersonation of the national spirit ;—where in due subordination lives a body of hereditary nobles, who, continuing the pride of the peerage in the persons of their eldest sons, while their younger are commoners, like the meanest peasant, form the most democratic aristocracy ever devised ;—where the great staple of the nation are enterprising yet liberal merchants, the not degenerate successors of those who alone made Venice famous, of those who raised out of the unhealthy swamps of Holland the best regulated community which social skill has yet devised ;—where territorial power is not so much the object of envy as the ambition of the commercial classes ; where the noble, in whose veins flows the blood of those haughty barons who persecuted merchants and despised commerce, thinks it no degradation to increase his princely income by commercial speculation ; where the merchant who has made an honourable fortune by means that conduced as much

to his country's glory as to his own advancement, is admitted by the favour of his sovereign into the ranks of the territorial aristocracy, and in his own and his children's person enjoys as much respect as belongs to the proudest descendants of a Howard or a Percy ;—where these feelings and sentiments had not been established in a moment, but had been the growth of ages, and had by a gradual action rescued the highest order of the realm from the ungracious distinction of being the privileged posterity of a conquering tribe, and had transformed it into a noble body that included none but the descendants of those who had been illustrious for loyalty, in ages when loyalty was rare, for talent combined with industry, for successful cultivation of the arts, which contribute to the good of humanity ;—where, lastly, these great powers so constituted should be found acting harmoniously by permanent organs, and taking no public measure which had not been approved by each of them—then surely theirs is the “Crowning City.”

CHAP. XIII.

THE NATIONAL ACME.—THE MECHANISM OF THE
SOCIAL ORDER.

"If men would be content to graft upon Nature and assist her operations, what mighty effects might we expect."—ADDISON.

It is not enough to observe the mere construction of the social order; we must examine also the mechanism by which it *works*. For the machinery must not merely exist, but it must also be capable of that perpetual movement which the restless life of the social elements requires. How is the requisite movement provided for in the organisation of societies in their acme?

Now a constitution implies the co-existence of two or more powerful social elements, and signifies a mutual compact between them. Under a pure aristocracy, a pure monarchy, or a pure democracy, the essence of a constitution, a balance of conflicting interests, is totally wanting; and, therefore, in the natural progress of society there can be no constitution till the original aristocracy has seen grow up against it two other elements—the monarchical and the democratic—to struggle for the supreme power, and to be the parties to the compromise out of which a constitution springs. This is what Montesquieu* meant when he said tersely that the corruption of the government of the conquering aristocracy has made the best form of government that men could imagine; and Montesquieu's best government was constitutional monarchy.

The constitutional stage of a nation is that in which the chief social elements have each attained a nearly equal power, even where there is no constitution, or recognised participation of political power, as, for instance, in France before the revolution, where the three great social elements co-existed, though two of them usurped the entire functions of government and legislation, and the consequent violation of the intimate relation which ought to exist between the social state and the governmental system, produced the revolution. A nation in its constitutional stage or acme is like a foxglove blossom,—a portion of it is decaying, a portion in full bloom, and another portion in bud.

Nations in this stage are, therefore, distinguishable into two broad classes : first, those which have both the social development necessary for a well-balanced constitutional monarchy, and which, in addition, have that government ; and secondly, those which have the social development, but want the appropriate government.

Of the first we may take, without charge of national prejudice, England as the chief if not the only example. Our government, as I have before noted, is no rigid system transferred from the closet of the theorist to the public offices of the state, but like every other firm and useful government, has gradually evolved itself as an unconstrained consequence of the national growth. The perfect archetypal idea according to which (if we were to admit for the moment that archetypal ideas exist) it would seem to have been developed, was of this kind :—to the Crown was entrusted the executive and a veto on any legislative act passed by the two houses which constituted the Parliament. The first house consisted exclusively of the major barons, the descendants of the conquering race, who were guardians over their own estates, the privileges of their order, and the interests of the commonweal. The second was composed of a small number of representatives of minor barons or Franklins (among whom, perhaps, were

the old Anglo-Saxon nobility), and a majority of representatives from the cities, ports, and boroughs—what Coleridge calls the “personal interest.” The advantage of this disposition of power was, that no one interest could successfully attempt to tyrannise over the other, as is the danger in all democracies. Should the landed interest combine to invade the rights of the personal interest, a majority in the lower house would defeat them. A conjunction of minor landholders and burgesses to overthrow the privileges of the peers could equally have been defeated by the negative of the upper house. An attempt on the part of the major barons to invade the yeomanry would also be rendered unsuccessful by the combination of the personal interest with the Franklins, more their equals in life than the peers.

• The genius of the British constitution, if ever it were personified, should have at least one of the characteristics of justice,—her scales. She should be a delicate female, the sole object of whose existence is to preserve the balance of a pair of scales placed in her hands. She has four weights called Monarchy, Aristocracy, Democracy, and Theocracy, the peculiar nature of which is, that they are continually changing their proportion. It is her object to shuffle these about so that the scales may always be equally balanced. The legend should run also, that if once either scale kicks the beam she dies. Her *Euthanasia*, if we believe Hume, will be when monarchy outweighs all the others.

To have established the three secular principles in equipoise and inter-dependency, is not the only achievement which Great Britain boasts. That they have grown up together in the country with nearly equal powers is the fortunate fact which has enabled our constitution to solve the great problem of bringing them into action without disturbance or convulsion. They are not only in equilibrium, but they act in equilibrium. It was this which presented itself to the mind of Tacitus as an almost in-

superable difficulty, and justly, for it has never been overcome except by the parliamentary régime which Montesquieu, after spending a thoughtful life in surveying English government, which might be seen in action or known through the cold medium of history, establishes to be the beau-ideal of governments. In that celebrated chapter, the sixth of his eleventh book, in which he treats of the constitution of England, he lays down that there are in each state three sorts of powers :—the Legislative ; the Executive, in affairs which relate to the rights of nations ; the Executive, in affairs which relate to civil right. There is no liberty if the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or body of persons, because the same monarch or senate may make tyrannical laws in order to execute them tyrannically. There is no liberty if the judicial power is not separated from the legislative and the executive. If joined to the legislative the judge could be legislator, and his power over life and property arbitrary ; if joined to the executive, the judge could have the force of an oppressor. Everything is lost if the same body of chiefs or the same man exercised all. There is despotism and absolutism whether of the one or of the many. In most European kingdoms the prince has the first two powers, his subjects the third. Among the Turks, as in the Venetian plutocracy and in the Athenian multitude after the time of Cleon, all are united. The power of judging ought not to be given to a permanent senate, but exercised by persons drawn from the body of the people at certain times of the year by law. There is always in a state which is or has been in a state of progress, a body of persons distinguished by birth, riches, or honours, to whom, if confounded with the people and allowed no distinct voice, the common liberty would be slavery ; the majority would exercise over them an absolute tyranny. It being therefore necessary that their part in legislation should be proportionate to the other advantages which they have in the state, it results that they form a body

which has the power to stop the illegal attempts of the people, as the people have the right to stop theirs. If there were no monarch, and the executive power were confided to a certain number of persons drawn from the legislative body, there could be no liberty, because the two powers would be to a certain extent united. The fundamental constitution of the government is that there exists a legislative body composed of two parties—an hereditary body of nobles and a body chosen to represent the people. The executive has only a veto on the legislative acts of the two houses.

This is, in brief, the idea of constitutional monarchy, as developed in Great Britain, and the model which so many of the continental nations have endeavoured in vain to transfer to their own countries. Why have they failed? Simply because they have overlooked and disregarded the fact, that the parliamentary institutions depend for their stability on being the representatives of separate interests; and when they cease to be this, when one of these interests perishes, the power of the whole fabric must fall. When the balance of power ceases to coincide with the balance of property, that portion of the state which has the greatest wealth will demand a corresponding accession of power; and even should it not be granted constitutionally, will acquire it by what is called, in the phrase of the day, "pressure from without." It may, therefore, safely be laid down as one of the conditions for the successful working of constitutional government, that the interest whose rights are provided for in this parliamentary system should have of itself strength enough to assert its rights, with chance of success, in a civil war. There must not only be a right of resistance, but also a power of resistance. Whatever sentimentalists (and sentimentalism is a dangerous virtue for a practical politician), whatever such persons may say about right, not might, it is quite certain that every state and every government which has existed for any length of time has been established by

violence, or the fear of it, and has continued to exist only because its enemies had not the force requisite to overthrow it. If there is not in the state a power of resistance by two or more of the colliding forces of society, it follows that the most powerful element is in reality the ruling body in the state, and that the other constitutional powers act as feeble checks upon it. They are no longer powers militant, for one is a power triumphant. When such a state of things exists the constitution has lost its vital principle, — the principle of compromise, — and exists only by the sufferance of the superior party. They have lost the safeguard against that political degeneration which is caused by the appropriation of public offices and the distribution of public property to serve the purposes of a class. The common desire to avoid such a calamity induces that perpetual jealousy which is so necessary for the maintenance of the constitution, and may excuse a defeated party for crying ruin upon every little reverse of their own. Thus the Reform Bill of 1832, and the Revolution of 1688, were both inveighed against as destructive to the constitution, because they were carried against the wishes of a great political party, and had, therefore, in their eyes, a direct tendency to destroy the equilibrium of counterbalancing powers, though, in effect, they secured that equilibrium, because the defeated party had previously more power than was its share. Thus it is a maxim of practical politics, often in recent times neglected, but never violated without disaster, *that not only is a constitutional monarchy the proper form of government for nations where the chief elements of civilisation opposite but not contrary to each other are simultaneously and equally developed, but also that simultaneous and equal development is necessary for the existence of constitutional monarchy.*

There are three classes of nations in their acme.

1st. Those in which all the social elements proper to that stage of national development co-exist, and where a

constitutional monarchy gives effect to them, and affords the natural and proper governmental machinery.

2nd. Those in which all the social elements proper to that stage of natural development co-exist, but where there is no constitutional monarchy.

3rd. Where some of these social elements are wanting, and the national development is, therefore, strikingly imperfect.

Of the first, England is the most perfect example. Let us illustrate the second by considering the state of France before the Revolution. There was a powerful monarch ; there was a body of hereditary aristocrats, who had been, and might have continued to be, formidable to the king ; there were industrious, educated, and wealthy traders ; all the materials out of which the English constitution has been formed—all the forces of society whose collision strikes out the bright spark of national splendour ; but to the last was denied the political power which their wealth and influence gave them the capacity of forcibly demanding ; and the aristocracy, descending to be courtiers, threw the weight of their influence entirely against the populace ; and hence, from the simple violation of the principle that the balance of power should coincide with the balance of property, came the Revolution. Now, subsequently, France desired a constitution, and consummated a miserable failure. For the French constitution of 1830 found in that country no body like the peers of England, great territorial potentates, who include in their order the men most distinguished for solid and substantial wealth, and those eminent for high descent, as well as the choicest of those who have been the most illustrious in their generation for personal acquirements ; forming together a compact and distinct body which, by its hereditary rights, is totally independent of the crown. The French aristocracy of 1830 were, on the contrary, altogether deficient in this independent power and honourable prestige. The peerage being for life only, and its possessors incapable of holding

large landed estates, they were necessarily dependent on the crown, and, beyond the power of exercising a constitutional right, their voice carried no weight with it. The consequence was, that all France divided into two parties, —crown and people,—the new phantom aristocracy naturally exercising whatever little power it had for the interest of their sovereign, on whom every peer was in some degree dependent. France, therefore, both before and after the Revolution, supports the proposition, that an incongruity between the form of government and the social elements of the state ends only in disaster. In the one case there was an aristocratical-monarchical government where there should have been a constitution like the English: in the other there was a constitution like the English, where there should have been either a centralised republic or an empire.

Now, of the third class of nations in their acme, viz. where some of the social elements are wanting, the examples are extremely numerous, and their diversity such that no two examples are alike, for none falls short of perfection in exactly the same point and to the same degree as another nation does.

Of all imperfect developments, that of Germany has been at once the most striking and the most perplexing to an inquirer who desires to understand the causes of social movements. The imperfection of German development arises not from the absence of any one of the social elements, but from the dislocated manner in which they have each pursued a separate and independent development. Instead of the aristocratic and democratic elements pursuing, as it were, on the same soil and in the same nation, their natural tendencies, it seemed as if, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the two elements belonged to a different people and a different land. The great mass of Germany remained under the sway of rude, feudal, and disunited barons, sometimes calling themselves kings and reigning dukes, acknowledging the Emperor as

their elected head ; while outside this organisation rose the free cities, which became the seats of riches, arts, and knowledge. But their effect on German civilisation was not to advance Germany as a whole to a constitutional period, but they segregated themselves from the rest of the mass, and rose, like Venice and the Dutch cities, as if there had been no feudal noblesse belonging to the same nation. The thirty years' war marks the epoch of their decay. The serfs of aristocratic Germany, left untouched by these cities, collected, after the lapse of many years, and in obedience to the same principles which had collected their populations into the old free towns, into other cities which arose to form a new democratic and plutocratic element in Germany. The old central head — the Emperor — exists no longer ; and the baronies, either singly or by lumping two or three together, have become independent kingdoms, centralised autocracies, with no other check upon their authority than the now rising plutocracies of Berlin, Vienna, and other great towns.

These free cities of which I have spoken (called also imperial cities because, as in other national developments, they obtained their freedom against the aristocracy by the favour of the central head,) so separated themselves from all the rest of Germany, which then remained a country of feudal aristocrats and agricultural serfs, that they must be regarded as in fact a little separate nation, rising into existence by trade and commerce, and harbouring within it no elements but the democratic, blended afterwards with the plutocracy which grew up within them. So complete is now their self-created isolation from the rest of Germany, that they, or at least the principal of them, speak none but the Dutch language, which was formed from, and is close akin to Low German, and to this Dutch dialect their writers gave a fixity and rank, while energetic rising German genius speaks High German, a language only just now brought to a pitch of literary refinement, and the lower orders speak the old

Low German. The Dutch language, like the Hans Towns and the cities of Holland, has reached its utmost development, and will change only to be corrupted. The High German, spoken at Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, and the other towns of advancing Germany, can hardly yet be considered a perfected or completed language. Like the people who speak it, it is in process of development. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these free cities were distinguished by all the characteristics of nations in the stage of mixed plutocracy and democracy. They had riches, arts, both the useful and the fine, knowledge, commerce, luxury, much reading, but no true literature (which is no production of commercial towns), and they all perished from the same reason, which has brought every other nation in that stage to its decay — corruption of character. Those cities in which the plutocratic element (erroneously called aristocratic) was supreme were devoured by a close jealous and dishonest oligarchy, those in which the democratic element prevailed were ruined by venality and cabal, and both alike were obliged repeatedly to invoke the Emperor's authority to quiet their dishonest factions. Commerce soon left them, and with it greatness. They sank out of note and left the raw material of democratic power, which existed in the then ignorant and agricultural serfs of Germany, to be worked up after a long interval into a new class of rich, refined, and powerful citizens.

Imperfect developments are thus caused not merely by the total absence of some national element, but also by its development at a wrong time, so that when the other elements are ready to form the national acme, this one has spent its force. As in Germany a portion of the democratic element developed and spent itself prematurely, so in France it was checked and kept back too long.

When a full national development has once begun, it may be checked by the subsequent defect of any one of the national elements : monarchy may be destroyed, as in

Athens and Rome, monarchy and aristocracy as in Holland, or—more fatal than either—the energetic and enlightened portion of the strictly democratic element, which by its action or inaction always exercises the principal influence in determining the degree of perfection attained by the national development, may be driven by civil or religious discords to seek a new home in foreign countries or in colonies. Thus were expelled the Moors, the principal portion of the Spanish populace who had both capital and taste for trade. Thus the commercial class of the Portuguese in the days of their greatness was driven to the Brazils, and thus the French Protestants were compelled to abandon their country and by their loss retard the development of France, till a new generation of artisans and merchants arose to take their place, and grapple with the dominant powers.

Now the essential characteristic of the national acme, however imperfectly developed may be the nation, is the existence of strong political parties. Where constitutional government is established, the government by parties, the alternate possession of power, limited constitutionally, by the most important interests in the state, is provided for by the constitution. On the other hand, in countries which have not a constitutional machinery, political affairs are frequently conducted by the alternate agency of great parties, where the absence of constitutional limits, and the freedom of the dominant class from any fixed or central power, deprives these temporary triumphs of all the moderation which adorns them in a constitutional country.

Wherever there is progress, there are but two real parties, the conservatives and the progressionists. Their watchwords and their subdivisions are given them by the circumstances of the time, by the points in national progress at which they each come into action. Sometimes, therefore, conservatism is “ultra-democracy, sometimes aristocracy, as in the civil wars of Rome, or in the English constitution now; and the advance may be sometimes

despotism, sometimes aristocracy, but always keeping its essential character of advance." *

Now let it be granted that the development of nations proceeds, when unarrested, in as regular and fixed a course as the development of everything else in nature, and upon that basis we can explain why these two great parties of conservatives and advancers appear occasionally under such different colours.

When an aristocracy is founded, and while all national conflicts are confined to its internal discords or to its contests with a rude monarchy, the word progress, or any corresponding idea to that generally supposed to be expressed by it, are not either in the mouths or the minds of men, for the changes that then take place in the aspect of the political world do not directly put in question the transfer of power from one great social element to another; it is merely a series of struggles between the baronial families among one another, and of them all together against the head baronial family upon the throne. But during the second and third stages there is rising, as sketched in the above scheme, a power which is eventually to grapple successfully with the aristocracy and the monarchy.

Permanence and progress are in the end the substance of all these party war-cries. In the Roundhead party there was the determination to resist the innovations of Charles. They were the real conservative party of the day, though their conservatism meant aristocracy and limited sovereignty against the assertions of attempted absolutism. In the contest necessary to preserve the existing constitution they overthrew it, but that does not deprive them of their just claim to be the party opposed to innovation. In the days of Bolingbroke we had the country party opposed to the court party, one anxious for permanence, the other for alteration, and from that

* Arnold, *Life and Correspondence*, 3rd ed. i. 410.

time to the present the kingdom has been divided between Tories and Whigs, who are in fact nothing but representatives of the two parties which ever appear not merely in politics, but in science, in religion, in philosophy, the parties of stability and change, and as Archbishop Whately has observed*, there are in most languages two sets of proverbs, one in favour of change, another against it; in truth they are but the accumulated wisdom of each of the opposite camps between which the warfare ever rages, though the standards and watchwords vary as the warriors vary:

" 'Tis the Past

Contending with the Present: and in turn
Each has the mastery."

In politics, as in everything else, the new is always victorious. The delay party is eventually beaten on every point at which they make a stand, but they are not the less useful to the state in restraining the too-headlong course of the progress party. The most intelligent of them confess that they endeavour only to retard the current, and despair of ever diverting it. They struggle only for the short period of their lives, often foreseeing that the triumph of their adversaries who sail heedlessly down the current of events is merely a question of time. It is the alternation of supreme power between each of these parties, by whatever name distinguished, that fosters the healthy working of constitutional government. They may be compared to two parties travelling along the same road; sometimes the foremost of the hinder party come up to the rear of the advance and form on with them,—sometimes the stragglers of the advance lag behind, till they are overtaken by others, and march along with them; sometimes the rear of the one and the van of the other meet and form together a middle party, which after a while joins one or other of the two extremes. The

* Annotations on Bacon's Essays, p. 227.

foremost are often clever but rash men, who turn into a good many tracks whither the great body will not follow, and have to retrace their steps till they join again the straight road : thus nations that too quickly advance have often to recede. The extremes of the rear are generally stupid and obstinate, hopelessly prejudiced to the old paths. They the less understand each other, because the former are afflicted with garrulity, the latter with deafness.

This fact, that both parties move necessarily along the same road, that of national progress, and that they differ only in one being desirous and the other unwilling to move, explains what would otherwise naturally excite our astonishment — the change which comes over a consistent man's political relations. Let us take the example of Burke, who began as a Whig, or man of the advance party, and remaining all his life consistent to the doctrines held by the whole Whig party in his youth, found himself late in life left almost alone between the two parties, and in fact coinciding more with the Tories than with the then Whigs ; for the Tories, slowly and unwillingly enough, had moved up to the place of the " Old Whigs." " I pitched my Whiggism low," said Burke, " that I might keep by it." Take again the instance of Lord Macaulay. In 1839, in a passage which as it sketches eloquently some of the leading points of political contest in the history of our country will not be out of place here, he said, " At Edinburgh I entered public life a Whig, and a Whig I am determined to remain. I use that word in no narrow sense. . . . It seems to me that when I look back on our history I can discern a great party which has through many generations preserved its identity ; a party often depressed, never extinguished ; a party which, though often tainted with the faults of the age, has always been in advance of the age ; a party which, though guilty of many errors and some crimes, has the glory of having established our civil and religious liberties on a firm foundation. It was that

party which on the great question of monopolies stood up against Elizabeth. It was that party which in the reign of James the First organised the earliest parliamentary opposition, which steadily asserted the privileges of the people, and wrested prerogative after prerogative from the Crown. It was that party which forced Charles the First to relinquish the ship-money. It was that party which destroyed the Star Chamber and the High Commission Court. It was that party which under Charles the Second carried the Habeas Corpus Act, which effected the Revolution, which passed the Toleration Act, which broke the yoke of a foreign church in your country, and which saved Scotland from the fate of unhappy Ireland. It was that party which reared and maintained the constitutional throne of Hanover against the hostility of the Church and the landed aristocracy of England. It was that party which opposed the wars with America and the war with the French republic, which imparted the blessings of our free constitution to the Dissenters, and which, at a later period, by unparalleled sacrifices and exertions, extended the same blessings to the Roman Catholics."

How few young politicians have begun upon the conservative side ! And very wisely, for as we see by the above sketch of political progress, there is every advantage to a man who can reconcile it with his convictions to begin on the advance side, because then he has the option either of advancing with his party, which, as it is the party of advance, he can do without opprobrium, or, if he prefers to remain consistent with his original professions, he will find in his old age the delay party come up to him and happy to enrol him of their number. Whereas, if he begins on the conservative side he must either advance with his party, which he cannot do without a certain opprobrium ; or, exposing himself justly enough to the charge of gross inconsistency, he must with a small and faithful band accelerate his own pace till he comes up with the advance. This was the course adopted by Sir R. Peel. Or

lastly, if he despises either of these alternatives, there is nothing left for him but to remain where he is, honoured for his consistency, but ridiculed even by his ancient partisans for his obstinate adherence to exploded views. They regard him as a sort of Lot's wife, and pass on.

There are two ways then of being consistent; you may be so either to your party or to your political principles. What do we mean by "political principles?"

Mankind is divided between the contents and the non-contents. Now at any point we please to take in the course of national progress the contents are satisfied to rest where they are, let it be in the lap of aristocracy, let it be under the fostering care of Divine right, let it be in the blessings of constitutional government; and at the very same points, the non-contents are, in virtue of their name, anxious to change. "We will make you quit aristocracy for democracy." "We say no Divine right, but the original contract." "We hate constitutional trammels on the will of the majority." But whatever be the particular tenets of the day, content is opposed to a great degree of energy and industry, and the latter qualities are opposed to stagnation. So that stagnation and content, though they are not the same things, are allied by a community of antagonists.

The principles for which men fight so bitterly, are often nothing but watchwords derived from the circumstances of the time; the real source of discord is the line which is drawn in human nature between content and discontent.* There are the impression and the feeling; the party word is but the symbol. It is an observation of Malebranche, "that our passions all justify themselves," that is, suggest to us opinions which justify them. People

* "Reperiuntur ingenia alia in admirationem antiquitatis, alia in amorem et amplexum novitatis effusa, pauca vero ejus temperamenti sunt, ut modum tenere possint, quin aut quæ recte posita sunt ab antiquis convellant, aut ea contemnant quæ recte afferuntur a novis."—*Bacon, Nov. Org.* i. 56.

feel before they think ; and thus when men are determined by their passions to stand their ground on the conservative or progress sides, they beat about for reasons to justify their choice. These, once received as principles, are no longer open to question, but stand the grim idols of the soul, in whose militant worship the selfish passions find a gratification.

"Et quod nunc ratio est impetus ante fuit." *What once was impulse, is now reason tried*

As idlers when they go out for a walk like to have some object before them, and devise some goal as the means to their taking a walk with a good conscience, and illogically enough call it an object, so people being driven by the force of circumstances into a party quarrel, invent some philosophical cause for it. Hence, in addition to merely fighting for or against things as they are in all the petty detail of their degrading circumstances, questions of speculative principle are introduced which ennoble the actors, but confuse the spectator. "I question not," says Lord Bolingbroke*, "but he did on this occasion what you must have observed many men to do. We not only endeavour to impose on the world, but even on ourselves. We disguise our weakness, and work up in our minds an opinion, that the measure which we fall into by the natural or habitual imperfection of our character is the effect of a principle of prudence or of some other virtue.†

How easily the application of these fixed principles may be changed to suit the circumstances of the time, is shown by the conduct of the country gentlemen, or Tories, in the time of James II. They were for passive obedience non-resistance to James, till James introduced Catholicism ; then, without deserting their principle, they were for passive obedience non-resistance, but this time to William, or, as Burke pointedly put it, they changed their idol, but they preserved their idolatry. And those principles and

* Letter to Sir W. Windham, Works, i. 79.

† See Hume's Essay on the Original Contract.

opinions themselves, which to men who take a first and untutored glance seem so fixed as to belong rather to our common nature than to any particular sect or time, are like the stars that seem fixed in the heavens, a delusion. He whose view embraces large periods of time will find all these creations and rules of the mind in a perpetual flux, only the less conspicuous when their movement is slower, and he will observe with sorrow but not with surprise, how the enshrined principles of one age become the scorn of the next.*

The stagnates of any age are always anxious to have it supposed that if they had lived an age or two back they would have been advancers. The feeling is natural. They are contents in the present state of things, and perceive, therefore, that to have been content in a former and inferior condition of society would have been wrong.† All the conservatives of this day, for instance, applaud the American revolution and the Hanover succession. The conservatives of this day are Protestants; would they have been so, if, being conservatives, they had lived in the year 1529?

A remarkable instance of the liability of the advancers of one age to become the stagnates of another is seen in some of the effusions of the present advocates for advance, who express hopes that society, after it has advanced a little further, may become stationary. When, for instance, all "the idle" shall have been extirpated, and none remain but those who labour for their daily bread, it will be very desirable, say those who possess what they call "moral conceptions far a-head of the existing arrangements of society," that progress should cease; and a more moderate progressionist, Mr. John Stuart Mill—who I suppose would not object to be called in the present day

* On the way in which principles are formed in our minds, see Locke's *Essay on the Human Mind*, bk. i. ch. 3. § 21, *seq.*

† See Burke's eloquent description of this state of mind, in his *Works*, ii. 226.

a radical—expresses an opinion in his chapter on the Goal to which Progress is to arrive, that society may with advantage after a little further advance become stationary. What is this but saying that, a little further down in the road of progress, Mr. Mill will become a conservative?

Supposing that there is a point at which progress ends, when no great or powerful element in the state is anxious for a change, when present discontent has realised its views, and those who were content before, with that happiness of constitution which belongs to them, are content with the new state of things, then there is naturally stagnation and the largest amount of political happiness that can be attained, though it is attained at the price of the national greatness. Hence some have decided that the greatest public felicity is enjoyed under a beneficent despot, whose subjects are all equal among themselves. I take leave to hesitate before I assent to such a position; but of this I am well assured, that there is in the blow by which private citizens establish a principate, a constant cause of success to develope, which belongs rather to the metaphysician than the political writer. Those who have succeeded, like Julius Cæsar, Napoleon III., or Kleisthenes, have begun by being the leaders of the discontents. Once enthroned in power, they have endeavoured to give effect to the tenets and aspirations of those who were before discontents, and who then must become in some degree contents. The contents in the old régime grumble at first, but place and power combine with their natural disposition to reconcile them to the new state of things, which they struggle against in vain*; so that for the

* The relics of the pre-despotic régime, whether in Augustan Rome or Napoleonic France, in their petty but honourable struggles with the new power, always remind me of Sir W. Temple's pretty comparison of such persons to the "man in a little boat who tugs at a rope that is fast to a ship. It looks as if he meant to draw the ship to him, but the truth is he draws himself to the ship, when he gets in, and does like the rest of the crew."

first reign in a new principate there is probably less discontent than exists at any other period. A prince always aims to extinguish party spirit and tranquillise his subjects. He does this by prohibiting every expression of discontent towards his government, and by expatriating those who are too honest or too headstrong to conceal their chagrin. This is how party contest, though founded on a great principle of human nature, subsides before a despot; and though human nature remains the same, and the same feelings would be aroused if any were, men abstract their attention and their thoughts from politics, and have no other sentiment with regard to their government than a dull conviction of its disagreeable necessity, and a hope to enter its ranks.

Where there is a constitutional monarchy, each of these two parties — the delay and the advance — is allowed an alternate triumph, provided that it does nothing to violate the constitution; if it did make any such attempt, the latent energy of the nation would give its assistance to the opposition in deposing the usurpers. The theory of the British constitution imposes that duty on the sovereign; and mixed as may be the feelings with which we look back on Elizabeth, of all our sovereigns perhaps none except William III. acted so much in accordance with the true idea of the constitution, for the secret of her rule was governing by factions. She balanced two opposing interests, and reserved in her own hand the power of making either predominate; jealously guarding that neither should sink so low as to leave the other complete master of the field — raising the fallen and bridling the victorious. That these factions were chiefly personal, and that no real progress was attained by the victory of either, was the circumstance of the time; for the really progressive power, the commons, advanced not directly, but indirectly, by means of these contests.

When a nation has arrived at its acme, and contains within it a strong patrician body, connected of course

chiefly with land, where the commercial classes have raised the plebeian element to be one of nearly equal power to the patrician, and where no third power holds the balance between these two conflicting interests, and where no constitutional machinery deadens the shock of their conflicts, each in turn, instead of desiring that limited exaltation which a constitution allows, aims at the absolute extirpation of the other. The oligarchs and the democrats, in the small states of Greece, marked their advent to power by the forcible expatriation and deportation of the conquered faction. At Rome in the time of Marius and Sylla, at Corcyra as described by Thucydides*, among the Italian Greeks, and with the Guelfs and Ghibelines, the Bianchi and the Neri in Italy, and in French history in the first thirty years of this century, party rancour carried men to the same extremes of horrors and atrocity, simply because the idea of a constitutional opposition was unknown, and is in fact impracticable without a third and counterbalancing element of independent power. The nearest approach to such violence in England was in the expulsion of the Cavaliers, and in the banishment of Bolingbroke and the execution of Russell†,—both at times when the third element in England was itself so seriously perturbed as to be unable to right the vessel of the state, and when it was in truth the very near equality of the contending factions, and the fact that they were struggling, not so much for the mastery over each other as to carry into effect their views respecting the Crown, that led them ultimately to feel that a compromise was the only means of getting out of the quarrel. An Act of Grace is the noblest and most characteristic exercise of the Royal prerogative in England.

In all these contests in any country except England, one power, the patrician, has been a declining one, and the

* Thucydides, iii. 70. 85.

† See Lord J. Russell's *English Government and Constitution*, p. 216. Macaulay's *History of England*, iii. 577.

other an advancing one. The advances which are apparently made by the patricians are in fact but a resumption of what they had previously lost, when the tide of plebeian inroad having for a time overreached itself, ebbs back from the power it has gained, but cannot keep, to regather its forces, and with the next wave to submerge for ever the shore it has left bare. There has been but one end to the strife—the victory of the popular party, although that victory has often been obtained by its placing itself under a political general who has himself conquered the conquerors. Such a person was the *τυραννος* of Grecian and the emperor of Roman history.

When such a catastrophe permanently arrives, and the former balance of parties cannot be restored, the national acme begins to wane, for without the freedom ensured by party government the glory of nations cannot last.

CHAP. XIV.

THE ANARCHY OF THOUGHT.

"The problem of the age is to reconcile faith with knowledge, philosophy with religion."—ARCHDEACON HARR.

IN the last five chapters I have sought to explain after a rough fashion the construction of societies in their acme, and the machinery by which they work. Let us now go beyond the anatomist and search out the breath of life which when once infused into dormant and sluggish nations calls them forth to the full glories of the acme. Let us dare to inquire into the soul of nations.

Again we start from the position that in national development there are two currents of civilisation, the one Homeric, the other Hesiodic, the first belonging eminently to the conquering, the second to the conquered race; but in the earlier stages of national progress, while the civilisation of the conquering race is imposed without contradiction on the whole population, the Homeric current of thought and feeling pervades the mind of the whole nation; and as it naturally arises among the members of the conquering race, so it is not unnaturally imposed on the conquered, who differ from their conquerors in little else than in weakness and the habits which a poor and servile life produce.

Now of these early ages it is a principle immutable that the minds of men are moved principally by their

emotions, not by their reason. As nations advance, and the civilisation of the conquered race rises to prominence, reason rather than emotion forms the link of the association of our ideas. Yet never of course is there a time when reasoning does not influence to a certain moderate extent the minds of men, nor ever was there a nation in which the emotions had utterly abandoned the sway of the association of ideas. But as in the Homeric current of civilisation emotions rule, so in the early ages of nations, when that civilisation is supreme, emotions almost banish cool reasoning from the mind; and as in the Hesiodic current reason rules the association of ideas, so in later ages, as the Hesiodic current of civilisation becomes more and more powerful in moulding the general civilisation, reason more than half deposes emotion from the sway of the human mind.

We, who live in an age of hard and exact reasoning, when education trains the mind to stifle the thoughts that are born of emotions, look back with contempt on the unenlightened ages when this canopy of the emotions shaded the human mind from the bright rays of reason. Our pride is in a measure justified. No nation steps forward to seize the torch of human progress till reason rules its leading minds. Inventions, arts, the subtle devices that lead to material prosperity, they are fruits which cannot ripen out of the mind of man, unless the rays of reason shine unclouded upon it.

Yet how beautiful the flowers that have grown under the canopy of the emotions, and which cannot bloom without that kindly shelter! How sweet the memory of the ages of faith!

The ages of faith are the ages of national youth. Let others dispute whether fetichism is the natural state of religious belief among uncultivated men. The savage who sees a god in every tree, and invents a genius for every storm, who in fact, conscious in himself of a power and a will capable of performing some, incapable of per-

forming other acts, imagines that for the accomplishment of superhuman efforts there must exist beings whose organisation resembles his own, and who differ only in the possession of a superior power and an unconstrained will—him, rightly or wrongly the father of rational religion, let us pass with as small a share of notice as we have previously bestowed on the father of civilisation; but let us embrace the eternal truth, *that the first ages of national life are the ages of belief.*

What are the emotions which prevail in the minds of the founders of nations? Be they peasants, shepherds, warriors, pirates, they have the feeling of wonder and awe developed to an extent that we can hardly imagine, and accompanied by a vivid consciousness of human insignificance, and the credulity which never fails to follow fear. Shall we be surprised at this? surrounded as they are by the great and unexplained movements of nature, powerless to counteract or guide them, accustomed to see no agency but that of the most open and palpable force, and scattered in sparse populations, often the unresisting prey of the tempest and the torrent. Divines may discuss whether this is a true religious feeling, but at least we may make certain that as knowledge increases and man's power over nature becomes greater, this rude foundation of natural worship becomes daily less, though while it lasts the foundations are deeply laid in the minds of men for the firm establishment of an unchecked theocracy.

For, as the secular institutions of a nation depend for their existence on the social elements present in a nation, so the theocratic institution depends on the mental characteristics of the population.

In the earlier ages, when emotion guides the association of ideas, faith rules untroubled by reason, and as a natural consequence of this, we find that in the first scenes of every incipient civilisation, the priest is enthroned as a power, not always the first in name, but the first in sub-

stance ; for though the sceptre takes precedence of him in processions, he sways the mind of its holder.

Long before politics were ever thought of as a science, the most deep and sagacious maxims now propounded on paper with much parade by our political philosophers, were quietly and silently acted on by a parcel of rude and illiterate barbarians. Nothing can be more wise than for an invading people to follow up their conquest over the bodies and lands of their subjects, by a seizure of the mental dominion which had previously been enjoyed by a native hierarchy. It was not always possible for the dominant race to trace a genealogy from the gods themselves, though this, as every one knows, was resorted to as often as possible among the ancients, with whom the hero was in the earliest ages a sort of intermediate being between gods and men ; and this was no vain imagination, if we consider that mere power and brute force formed the sole standard of comparison. The gods were venerated as the possessors of an unchecked power over nature ; in all else, except their immortality and power of becoming invisible, they were but men and women ; next to them naturally came the persons who by superior valour had won possessions for themselves. Were not the subject people justified in making such a gradation, and would not this feeling of awe be mightily heightened if the heroes took upon themselves to be the interpreters between their subjects and the divine race ? Let us not wonder then if these persons of the second-class power desired to persuade their inferiors, with whom they had no fellow-feeling as partakers of a common humanity, that they cultivated amicable relations with the divinities superior to both ; and the heroic legislator was often content to abandon the merit of originality for the greater power he acquired by attributing his laws to superhuman inspiration. Minos, according to Homer, visited every nine years the cave of Jupiter, Lycurgus is said to have attributed his laws to Apollo, Zamolais in Thrace, Zaleucus

in Locris, and Numa in Rome, availed themselves of the same feint to make their laws more imposing. Machiavel says that Numa was of more benefit to Rome than Romulus, for thus bringing in religion to conduce to the stability of the state; and he adds, "Certainly never any men brought in new laws or set up any doctrine extraordinary, but with pretence of religion, because otherwise they would never have been admitted; for a man may be wise, and know many things are good, and yet want reasons and arguments to convince other people; wherefore to remove that difficulty, prudent men do make that always their pretence; and Solon, Lycurgus, and several others who had the same design, practised the same." *

And even in times and places where there was no attempt at any legislation but that of the sword, the stronger race filled the offices of the priesthood out of their own body. Often this has been done by the imposition of the religion of the conquerors on that of the conquered, a thing not difficult when the only substantial ground of religious belief is the fear of a power felt but not seen. The *εὐπατρίδαι* of Athens assisted their political and social ascendancy by a usurpation of the chief religious offices.† The Principes Etruriæ, the Lucumones, were a warlike sacerdotal caste, who ruled their subjects by fear, bodily and mental, and communicated to the Roman patricians the sacred art of divination, which was one of the firmest pillars of their own aristocratic power.‡ The Sibylline books and the augur's lore were potent in retarding the catastrophe of the patricians, for it was not till they threw aside the teaching of their old pantheological doctrines of Etruria for the literature of Greece, that their power began seriously to wane.

On the formation of the modern nations of Europe, the process§ of joining theocracy to aristocracy was still more

* Discorsi, bk. i. ch. xi.

† Grote, iii. 96.

‡ Niebuhr, Hist. Rom. i. 120.

§ To this Machiavelli devotes the 13th Discourse of the 1st book.

easy than it had been among the ancients. The victorious Normans had only to convey the pope to their camp*, with an armed guard of much mute eloquence, to kneel to him, to receive from him investiture in all their conquests, past and future; and then, with admirable effect, they might proceed to fill all the bishoprics and rich ecclesiastical berths with their sons and brothers. They proved what other instances have always confirmed, that to a primary warrior aristocracy, as well as the monarchy, which often grows out of it, the theocratic power is, of all auxiliaries, the most easily obtained and the most powerful.

Although the human mind is everywhere the same, and is always similarly affected by the same internal conditions, insomuch that no people whatever have, as far as I know, begun their national career without this deep seated feeling of awe for supernatural power, yet the utmost diversity has prevailed, both in the forms of religious belief, and the construction of that social power which is built upon it.

In that form of Christianity which was spread through all western Europe before the Reformation, there was more adaptation for an alliance with a king than with an aristocracy. Centralisation is the very essence of the Church of Rome; and in the early ages of European history, centralisation, in however moderate a degree, was the end and object of every ambitious monarch. His very existence was necessary to the commonweal, only for the purpose of linking the baronies of the state together: and in the presence of so firmly knit a body of men as the ecclesiastics then were, it is scarce to be wondered at that a king who desired the consolidation of his throne, gave all his favour to the bearers of the crosier, who, in addition to this sacred character, were also possessors of powerful baronies. In return, the kings became like those of Israel, the anointed of the Lord. This harmony, natural as it might be, was unable, as we all know, to

* Sismondi, Rep. Ital. i. 267.

survive personal differences. It is far from our plan to trace the estuating of this social force; it is sufficient to have indicated its tremendous power and its adaptation for union with the dominant monarchy.

Montesquieu, whose advice is occasionally as frank as that of Machiavel, recommends a monarch who wishes to be absolute, to ally himself with Roman Catholicism; and as a clear-witted professor has remarked apropos of Philip II., bigotry will always ally itself with an absolute government, for both are the gratification of a brutal self-will. The upholders of a power that allows no question to be asked about it, have a natural though not so universal a tendency to prevent others reasoning about their faith. Gustavus Vasa was one of the very few who humbled the priesthood, and yet aimed himself to be absolute.

Thus, as a political fact, the aristocratic monarchy which rules in the earlier ages of nations, secures its power over the minds as well as the bodies of the people; and we find the intellect of the nation slowly advancing while yet in the leading-strings of an aristocracy whose members either are themselves priests, or are the allies and masters of the priests. Few things are more interesting than to trace how, under the shelter of the old blind faith, a species of moral philosophy arises, and after a time emerges from the husk in which it has grown. At the moment when it does so, the nation starts forward from the inglorious ranks where it has lingered, and advances to the primacy of the world.

In the earlier ages of Grecian history the aristocrats were both priests and statesmen; the earliest manifestation of philosophy is in the form of maxims uttered by the old sages of Greece, and attributed to the seven wise men.

"In these celebrated names," says Mr. Grote*, "we have social philosophy in its early and infantine state—in the shape of homely sayings or admonitions, either supposed

* Hist. of Greece, iv. 129.

to be self-evident, or to rest upon some great authority divine or human, but neither accompanied by reasons, nor recognising any appeal to inquiry and discussion as the proper test of their rectitude The half century which followed the ages of Simonides of Keos (480–430 B.C.), broke down that sentiment more and more, by familiarising the public with argumentative controversy in the public assembly, the popular judicature, and even on the dramatic stage; and the increased self-working of the Grecian mind thus created, manifested itself in Socrates."

In fact, the poets of Greece, especially the dramatic poets, were the teachers of moral philosophy.* Their chants taught all that was known or fancied of the ways of the gods and how to please them, and the right mode of governing states and individuals; while the songs of the banquet wielded despotically the empire of the feelings, and by commemorating the great actions of their ancestors prompted men to win a yet loftier renown; and we who read in our solitary cloisters the tragedies of *Æschylus* and *Sophocles* obtain but a poor idea of their tremendous effect, unless we repeople in our minds those ancient theatres hollowed out of the native rock, where, beneath the cloudless sun of Athens, these dramas were performed in presence of the wisest and most beautiful of Greece, as part of their worship to *Dionysus*.

The Athenian civilisation will ever fascinate the attention of posterity, as up to the time of the sophists the most beautiful manifestation of this early phase of the national mind; but we find the same characteristics displayed, though with far less beauty, in the youth of every other nation. Over the whole of the national mind is spread that respect for authority, that readiness to believe, that empire of the emotions, that noble unreflecting obedience to lofty impulses which form a magnificent canopy,

* See Degerando, i. 277. Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, viii. 458, *sqq.* St. John Hellenes, i. 234, *sqq.*

overhanging the yet tender mind of the nation, and fostering under its kindly shade all the poetry of life.

The sun of Reason shines brightly above it. As the hour of a nation's greatness approaches, there is a movement in the air—the clouds are about to disperse. Dare we hope that they may disperse utterly, and leave nothing between man and the unsullied rays of Reason? No. Our feeble minds cannot bear the full light of that orb. We have need that some of the canopy should remain to shelter us.

Where, then, shall the rays burst the clouds? Shall they break through that part of the canopy under which human authority has ruled unquestioned? The nation can bear this. Through that part whence aristocracy has directed its sway?—it can bear this also;—or where human emotions have usurped the domain that belongs to rigid and exact science, where the old system of morals, or where the old forms of education, or where the old codes of honour, darken the air? The nation can bear all this, but let not the rays of Reason dare to penetrate the sacred canopy of religious faith. If they do, madness ensues. We have seen more than one nation—it is sufficient to name France—maddened by a sunstroke of Reason. *Not So bad.*

In reading the annals of any people, we should always begin by observing the form and manifestation of this early mental canopy; and history will no longer appear a mere catalogue of fortuitous events if we set ourselves to trace through the progress of the nation the mode and fashion after which these beautiful clouds are first made to throw the splendour of their varied and deceiving hues over the national mind, till one by one they float away in the noon-day brightness of the acme. I know no study more deeply interesting—none which more vividly brings home to our imagination the power of the Creator, who has permitted us to probe with the subtlest instruments of reason every species and form of existence except His

own. That is a subject on which we are apparently incapable of reasoning. He has taken compassion on our imperfection, and has supplied our cravings by Revelation.

In this most solemn of themes, how striking it is to find the true and the false, the genuine and the mock, ever interwoven together. When some bold spirit arises in a nation, and seeks to remove, though it be but a corner of this canopy from the mind, a dismal howl is raised, *a Bishop says 1866* that he is inquiring into things that man is forbidden ever to know; and so, because it is true that the health of our minds requires that a part of the canopy should never be lifted, scarce any one in any age, in any country, has ventured to lift any other part of it without being branded with impiety.

The men who have successively freed the minds of nations, stand on the most exalted pinnacle of the temple of fame, the truest benefactors of mankind. Thales is reported to be the earliest—Thales who, as the phrase of the historians has it, divorced philosophy from religion. If we inquire how it happened that Thales did this, and how, notwithstanding the divorce, the two have again been united during the earlier ages of every national history, we may obtain some further insight into the laws according to which nations have their being and development. At the time when Thales arose, the cities of the Ionian Greeks had all the material requisites for stepping forward to the Primacy of the world—wealth, commerce, arts, refinement, all these they possessed; they wanted but the best and most precious gift—intellectual liberty, and this Thales was the means of giving them.* After his time there was among the Ionian Greeks perfect intellectual liberty; but that liberty extended not to the

* To class Thales with the other six of the seven wise men, is like classing Venice with an aristocracy. They were the sages of nations in the age of faith, emotions, and aristocracy. Thales was the guiding light in a nation free from aristocracy, and just stepping forward to the front rank of discovery and progress.

Greeks of the continent; for when Anaxagoras, the disciple of Thales, came to Athens, he was expelled for impiety, for he dared to talk of the god Helios as a red-hot inanimate mass. It was not till after the death of Socrates that the Athenians can be said to have possessed intellectual liberty; and in Rome the expulsion of the rhetors and philosophers are signs that till the age next after Cato, there was no real freedom of thought and speech.

Now the misfortune of the ancients lay in the impossibility of their freeing their minds without becoming irreligious, for no one could fail, upon the slightest inquiry into their faith, to see the falsehood of it. Consequently no sooner was sufficient liberty of thought ensured to make the nation enter on the path of discovery and intellectual progress, than there came also the madness and demoralisation, which ever ensues upon irreligion. This was the principal cause why in antiquity corruption always followed civilisation so closely, that it seemed to be part of it. Christianity, among all its blessings, has conferred upon mankind no greater boon than this: that as nations become enlightened by the passing away of the old emotional tone of mind which prevails in the infancy of nations, as Reason lights up each successive faculty of the mind, irreligion ensues not, sanity is preserved.

Upon the topic to be discussed in this chapter, the history of the ancients affords us very little food for useful reflection. It is the same story in all: as the nation arrives at its acme it wins for itself intellectual liberty, it deposes from their supremacy the forms and modes of thought which have previously ruled the public mind, and it establishes the anarchy of thought. And where the religion is false, that too must perish, and nothing remains to satisfy the cravings of the human mind for worship, but a rude kind of theism, which amounts to little else than an acknowledgment that man is not his own creator.

Let us rather turn to the history of modern nations which have possessed a true religion, and let us study the illustrations which they present of these three propositions: 1st. That in the earlier ages of nations, emotions rather than reason rule the mind. 2nd. That political institutions depend for their propriety and stability on the social and mental condition of the nation in which they are established. 3rd. That when the political institutions of the theocracy are in harmony with the mental condition of the nation, an anarchy of thought may be established in Christian nations without producing a national infidelity.

It is difficult for us, accustomed to connect the idea of theology with the teaching of a pure and unpretending Church, whose ministers aim to influence men's minds by reason rather than a despotic authority, and living in an age when no one principle, theological or other, exercises a universal control over the current modes of thinking—for us so happily placed in the temperate zone of opinion, it is difficult to realise the state of society and the state of mind in the early ages of modern Europe. The conquest of devotecism over every kind of knowledge; the manner in which it wrested all sciences to its own purposes, or prohibited their cultivation; the undisputed pre-eminence of theology as the universal science; its total monopoly of the student's mind in the universities of the Gothic ages—this is the burden of every one who has written in a Protestant spirit of the scholastic ages. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the conquest had been completed; and in the cloisters of Oxford, as much as among the students of Sainte-Geneviève, it was a dogma which no professor thought it necessary to support, no student was impious enough to doubt, that the highest knowledge of mankind was the knowledge of that system which the Church, during twelve centuries, had founded upon Scripture; and the cut-and-dried learning which had filtered through the subtle webs spun at Alexandria and

at Cordova. The good work was to strengthen this all-absorbing system ; to show that it contained all truth, all the materials of wisdom, not only in affairs merely religious, but in every branch of intellectual research ; so that a manual of theology contained the first rudiments of knowledge put into the student's hands ; by thus studying the decrees of the Church and the opinions of great divines, some acquaintance might be obtained with what it would now be a mockery to call natural or mental philosophy.

The great text-book was the "Book of Sentences," *Liber Sententiarum*, of Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris, which was published in the twelfth century. It raises a long series of doubts and questions, and decides them all by the authority of Scripture and the Fathers. It is divided into four books. The first contains questions concerning God and the doctrine of the Trinity ; the second, concerning the Creator ; the third, concerning Christ and the Christian religion ; the fourth treats of duties religious and moral. It may afford some idea of the extent to which this technical divinity was studied, to state that upwards of 500 commentaries were written upon the "Book of Sentences." In composing these were consumed the energies of whole generations of learned men.

The current literature of the thirteenth century, which circulated among the learned throughout France, Germany, and England, consisted almost exclusively of the "Sums of Theology" (*Summæ Theologiæ*), which, in fact, were abridgements of the fragments of universal knowledge piled in a pyramid, with theology proper at the summit. The earliest of these "Sums of Theology" was that of the Doctor Irrefragabilis, who died in 1245 ; but the most celebrated and the most read was the *Summa Theologiæ* of Aquinas. In it are investigated 512 questions, many of them on the nature, arts, and powers of angels, and the whole celestial hierarchy ; but, as has been remarked, there is only one in any way concerned with the material

world ; this, of course, as Dr. Whewell* has remarked, would not be remarkable in a treatise on theology, unless this theology were intended to constitute the whole of philosophy. But it was so intended, for Scotus Erigena spoke the belief and opinion of the Christian world when he said, "There are not two studies, one of philosophy, and the other of religion ; true philosophy is true religion ; and true religion is true philosophy." The very opposite of Thales' doctrine. But religion and philosophy cannot be divorced once for all from mankind, but must be divorced in each successive nation when the moment of its greatness arrives. And as among the ancients we find that all knowledge in the early ages of nations was indissolubly connected with the lore of the priests and the augurs, so in the youth of the Christian nations we find this universal science established under the panoply of the church-teaching, and the rulers of the human mind endowing every principle and tenet of this science with the authority belonging to an article of the faith, and anathematising the disbeliever on a point that might be experimentally proved, as ruthlessly as the sceptic on a question that a Church can alone decide.

While this canopy of church-teaching was spread over the whole mind in those early ages, and reasoning allowed only to glimmer faintly through some accidental crevices, what beautiful lights and shadows were thus thrown across the darkened avenues of the human soul ! As among the ancients poetry flourished before philosophy, so the Troubadours, the Provençal bards, the early poets of England and our Scandinavian kinsmen—what exquisite examples they produced of the Flowers that grow in the Shaded Mind ! In fact, in such ages when emotions rule the association of ideas, the poetry which arises is the spontaneous expression of the uneducated wisdom, the homely feeling, and the traditionary lore of the lay

* Hist. Ind. Sc. i. 318.

populace, expressed in a manner most likely to captivate the fancy and be retained in the memory. From the lay of the minstrel harper in the castle hall, who told of knights and tournaments; from the drinking song at the baron's banquet; from the ballad hummed by the Saxon churl as he tended his master's flocks; from the tale which beguiled the pilgrim's journey; from the rhyming wisdom of the old wife trowling at her wheel,—there arose through the length and breadth of our land (nor was it singular in this respect in Europe) a continued strain of song and melody, far more diffused and far more natural than the tutored notes of the caged singing birds at Versailles, or the decasyllabic pastorals of the piping Corydons of Twickenham.

Ah! when we think of the beautiful products of those darkened ages, somewhat of sorrow saddens our souls as we see them melt away while Reason ascends to its meridian.

That process of the old canopy dissolving away from the mind, has been in all nations a gradual and slow one, and the series of dissolving views which the mental history of nations passing through that process presents, is charming and fascinating in the extreme. The metaphysical mood of mind which prevails in a nation just before the acme — what is it but one of these dissolving views, when the old exclusive belief of the theologians in the direct agency of a numerous celestial hierarchy wanes away before the light, not yet strong enough to dispel those beautiful forms from the human imagination, but strong enough to require that some explanation should be rendered of their existence; some foundation for belief in them sought for in the human intellect. Then they cease to be fetishes, and mere poetical gods and goddesses, and become allegorical personages; and while metaphysics proper deal with and reason about the intermediates which, according to the true metaphysical notions, govern the world, the new shade passes over the popular poetry

also, and we read in *Æschylus*, *Lucretius*, *Chaucer*, of Strife, and Terror, and Strength, and Sorrow, and the like, absolute entities erected into personal and powerful agents. The Pagan personifications had their exact correlative in the abstractions which were the demigods of the schoolmen; and while the scholastic metaphysics prevailed among the learned of Europe, Dante gave what we familiarly recognise as a metaphysical tone to the poetry of Italy.

The variety and beauty of the views formed by this early canopy melting away from the mind, are wonderful in the extreme; and brilliant as is the splendour of the acme, there must ever be felt some fond regret for the mental scenes which preceded it.

We have said again and again, but can hardly say too often, that political institutions depend for their propriety and stability on the social and mental conditions of the nation in which they are established. The early theocracy of modern Europe was appropriate, for it was founded on the mental condition of the European nations. Italy was the first to start forward to its acme. Italy was unspeakably unfortunate in retaining the institution of a theocracy after it had ceased to be appropriate. You have sometimes seen a flower unable to shake off the husk out of which it has grown, and which lies rotting in the core of its blossom. So it was with Italy—that husk of pantheology, which ever envelops the first phases of national life, lay rotting in the heart of Italy in its day of glory.

No one can have a clear idea of European history without fully appreciating the totally different conditions, both mental and social, of Italy on the one hand, and the rest of Europe on the other, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There was the least possible sympathy between the changes going on among the inhabitants of that peninsula, and those of England, France, and Germany. Their ways were not our ways, their ends were not our ends. Italy, without throwing off its absolute theocracy, was

rapidly proceeding in the course of national progress without adapting the theocratic element to the other changes, undermining the source of power without removing the power, introducing the spirit of inquiry into the secrets of nature, and yet professing to be sons of a Church which forbade that introduction ; and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Italy had arrived at its acme, while France and England had scarcely passed out of the first phase which succeeds the invasion of a conquering race. Theosophy, therefore, was better learned on this side the Alps than even in the metropolis of Catholicism ; and this condition explains the very curious circumstance, that the best divines of Italy, a country then crowded with universities, sought, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an ecclesiastical education at Paris. For in France at that time, all but peasants were devoted to the pursuit either of arms or of theology ; while in Italy the universities were filled, first with civilians, and afterwards with teachers of the ancient language and literature, who aimed at preparing the sons of Italian nobles and merchants, not only for the forum, but for high municipal and ambassadorial functions. When the exertions of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and other learned countrymen of theirs, had exhumed ancient literature, and the courts of Italian potentates were thronged with the ingenious cultivators of their native literature, and the able restorers of the Greek, then the pope assumed a curiously double aspect. On one side of the Alps he was regarded as the infallible head of the system of barbarous scholasticism, which looked upon attention to rhetoric, or elegance of speech as forms of heresy ; in Rome he was the great Mæcenas of poets, scholars, and satirists ; his mental dominion being in short as different on the two sides of the Alps, as the physical dominion of Alexander, who, while he commanded Henry II. of England to be whipped at the tomb of his subject, was himself an exile ; and so the pope in Italy gave way to the mental fashion of

the times. The refined noblesse of Italy, and its petty despots, vyeing with each neighbouring state, fostered all the genius they could attract around them, and themselves emulated it; the pope, as one of these temporal sovereigns, often brought up in the very centres of literature, and sometimes himself raised to the chair of St. Peter for his ability and accomplishments, might reasonably wish that his court should not be inferior in intellect and splendour to those around him.

Italy, then, in the fifteenth century had one of the characteristics of the national acme—its literary splendour; it had likewise others—an extensive commerce, some military and considerable naval renown, and, what is more to our purpose here, it enjoyed that freedom from the domination of any one principle, theological or other, which is perhaps the most marked and necessary characteristic of the acme. It is to the mental and social life what a well-balanced constitution is to the political, for each consists in an *ἀναρχία*.

But though it got rid of the spirit of theocracy, it did ~~not~~ not get rid of the old institution. Inquiry could not be checked, and inquiry proved that some of the old church tenets were manifestly false; the Romish Church clung to them as if they were essential parts of her fabric, and the minds which had disproved these were thus compelled by the Church to take all or none of its lore; and not being able to take all, they ended by taking none. What was the result? In Italy, in the fifteenth century, there was a hollow profession of belief and a licensed disbelief. The sapped and corrupted hierarchy was never shaken off. A power however bad, when it is not believed to be bad by those who submit to it, does not necessarily corrupt and degrade its subjects; but professed obedience to a power which is believed depraved and illegitimate, destroys for ever the honour and independence of a nation. Those who say that Italy had no need of the Reformation, utter only half a truth. They are correct in their remark,

that civilisation could be attained without it; but neglect the dreadful consequence, that instead of possessing a church whose ministers might justly claim respect for their pure life and their freedom from political scheming, their religion was assumed at the church door when the priest put on his vestments, and left off when they quitted the sacred edifice; their literature was devoted to satirising the vices of those men who made it impossible for a reasonable and moral person to look upon religion with affection or respect, without averting his glance from its ministers: and their national character was for ever depraved by a universal profession of belief and a universal disbelief.*

Another form of imperfection is presented by France, which, like Italy, reached its acme and its anarchy of thought without getting rid of the ecclesiastical supremacy; but, unlike Italy, it did not gradually throw off the inappropriate supremacy of the monarchy and the aristocracy, but retained all three supremacies as political institutions long after the foundations of their dominion over the human mind had passed away. The Revolution was the result. Instead of gradually dispelling the clouds, Reason suddenly burst in upon the national mind and maddened it.

A perfect development is never attained without many a blood-stained struggle, and the Reformation was the struggle by which the theocratic element was reduced to its due level of equality with the other social elements in countries where the Reformation succeeded. It is the struggle which must ever arise at the period when the anarchy of thought approaches, unless the theocracy immediately succumbs.

It is too long to show in this place how the political change, which is called the Reformation, was prepared and rendered necessary by the change which came over

* The artificial state of compromise between opinion grounded on conviction of truth, and public adhesion to the disbelieved dogmas of authority, is admirably illustrated by the conduct of Galileo and his judges, in Dr. Whewell's *Hist. Ind. Sciences*, i. 399.

the mind of Europe, and for which Ockham, in the fourteenth century, prepared the way. He planted those seeds of doubt in the correctness of the Romish teaching which bore their glorious fruit two centuries later. The Nominalists, in attacking the Realistic doctrines of the church, made the chink in the old pantheological canopy, through which, in modern nations, the rays of Reason first shone into the human mind.

The anarchy of thought must, in order to be complete, be both political and mental. Politically, it requires the equalisation of the spiritual with the temporal powers, and the toleration of all creeds. This toleration is only to be procured by the abolition of any establishment, or by the maintenance of Protestantism as it was understood in Holland in the seventeenth century, and as it is understood now by the majority of Englishmen.

It is possible for the anarchy of thought to be established without the anarchy of religious systems. Such was the case in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; in France during the eighteenth century; and among certain circles in England in Charles the Second's reign; but the consequence of such a combination is a total infidelity in the fundamental principles of religion.

The causes of the dethronement of the ancient hierarchical power from its original eminence are mainly three;—the influence of commerce, the rise of the citizen order, and the refinement of the noblesse. One or more of these are always present and increasing in strength during this period of the national progress; and though they are not alone in producing this change, they are yet constant causes which are sufficient to produce it, and deserve therefore to be distinguished from causes which are only of occasional occurrence.

The commercial value of toleration has always forced itself very vividly on the minds of trading states, and of the bourgeois element in larger countries. The Venetian government, jealous at all times of any social power

unrecognised by its constitution, distinguished itself beyond all the other states in Italy by subjecting the priesthood to the senate, and, regardless of excommunications, it allowed a freedom of thinking and speaking, which had the economical advantage of drawing to Venice the expelled industrial population of other countries. One of the great trades of the Venetians consisted in printing the literary productions of foreign thinkers; and in the diffusion of those which were prohibited by the pope they enjoyed a profitable monopoly. Venice was the last place that succumbed to the establishment of an inquisition, and after the first horrors were over the inquisitors were not allowed to interfere with the public devotions of the Protestants.* As Selden says†, the Venetians were Roman Catholics because they liked the religion, not because they cared about the pope.

Holland affords another instance of toleration from commercial reasons. Its first step to manufacturing and commercial greatness was to offer a free asylum to persons elsewhere exposed to persecution for their political or religious opinions. They brought with them to the Dutch cities of refuge a foreign skill and ingenuity, and that necessity to resort to them, which immediately made Holland a great commercial state. The Jews breathed nowhere so freely as in the Dutch atmosphere.‡ Every European persecution, every evil stroke of the strong theo-

* M'Crie's Reformation in Italy, 2nd edit. p. 271. Burnet's Letters from Switzerland and Italy, 1686, p. 146.

† Table Talk, tit. Religion.

‡ It is remarkable that in France, at the beginning of its acme, absolute toleration was established in Paris. "Il fut ordonné, avec le plus profond mystère, au lieutenant de police de ne faire, au sujet de la religion, aucune recherche ni des vivants, ni des morts, pourvu qu'il n'y eût point d'assemblées ni de scandale public." It was to remove this toleration, which was springing up in proportion to the increase of commerce, that the party of bigotry procured the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. See the *Mémoire* of M. le Baron de Breteuil, in *Rulhière, Eclaircissements Historiques*, p. 320.

cracies of Europe, allied as they mostly were with the monarchs, sent to the United Provinces a new cargo of honest, industrious citizens, skilled in cunning arts. And in those provinces, as in Venice, the trade of printing, which was carried on with little regard to the nature of the opinions disseminated, became a source of enormous revenue; so that the two most commercial states of modern Europe have each been distinguished by the principle of toleration, a principle which may always be traced in other countries in proportion to their commerce.*

It is instructive to observe how the commercial necessity, or at least the commercial advantage, of toleration has impressed itself on sagacious despots who desire to transplant commerce into their own dominions. Frederic the Second of Prussia, the most intermeddling of monarchs, was in this dilemma. As a military sovereign desiring to be absolute, Roman Catholicism was the form of religion politically most suited to him: as the promoter of commerce and the inviter of commercial and manufacturing exiles from other countries, it became him to establish religious toleration. He got out of the difficulty thus: he never spoke of religious toleration, or decreed it, but whenever the priests made any attempt to be intolerant he checked them.† The just expelled Tuscan government, notorious for its bigotry and intolerance, went to work in a more obvious and vulgar method: desiring to make Leghorn a seat of extensive trade, it tolerated there congregations which would at once have been dispersed in any other part of its territory.

In connection with this natural alliance between commerce and toleration comes the second cause of hierarchical depression, the political adaptation of Protestantism to the

* "And first as to freedom of religion; it is certain that having till this time been greater in Holland than anywhere else, it hath brought in many inhabitants, and driven out but few."—*De Witt, Maxims*, part i. ch. 18.

† Mirabeau, *Monarch. Pruss.* i. 100.

peculiar tastes of citizens. To them any form of absolute government, with a train of dignitaries and pre-eminences, is distasteful, and they prefer to have their religious wants supplied by men who aim at no very great exaltation above their flocks. The old manufacturing and commercial element of France, ejected by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was as little pleased with the pomp of a hierarchy as with the pomp of a noblesse. The founders of British America went to establish puritanism in a country where they could be free even from the moderate episcopacy of England; and for a people living in republics or democratic colonies the Calvinistic regime is eminently adapted. Monarchies limited by aristocratic power harmonise best with Lutheranism, for they have no desire to destroy episcopal pre-eminence, but rather prefer that the spirit of inequality shall prevail among the ministers of religion, while they embrace with much avidity Luther's subjection of the spiritual to the temporal powers. At the time of the Reformation, Protestantism recommended itself to different countries, for very various reasons. In purely commercial countries it was readily adopted for the causes above stated. In England the Tudors, who, of all our monarchs, had most reason to appeal to the sympathies of the citizen class, were the founders and supporters of English Protestantism, which won but little favour from the nobility till the time of James II., when the natural affinity between Catholicism and absolute monarchy became sufficiently conspicuous to recommend the political virtues of Lutheranism. In Denmark and Sweden, then, monarchies limited by the noblesse, Papacy and Calvinism were equally abhorred*; and that very ceremonial Lutheranism, which now strikes an English traveller in those countries as affording a strong contrast with the forms of his own church, was established by the united voice of the nobility. Luther's system strengthened the power of

* Molesworth's Denmark, 6th edition, p. 176.

those monarchs who had been on ill terms with Rome, but weakened them if they had been on good terms with the Romish clergy. In the one case, it removed a factious order; in the other, it crippled one of the king's best allies in his natural war with the nobility.

Calvinism, like Roman Catholicism, and even Lutheranism, knows how to persecute upon occasion, so that it would be far from correct to say that the citizen order always hates persecution; but it is to the fact that each social force in the constitutional age has its separate form of religion attached by natural harmony to it, that is due the maintenance of a balance among the religions of a state, proportionate to the balance among the secular elements. If any one of the religions were without strong rivals, both religious and political, I would not trust it to refrain from persecution.

The third cause of the anarchy of thought is the refinement of the noblesse. This applies rather to the mental than the ecclesiastical anarchy; for politically there is great harmony between an episcopal and an aristocratic system, and Calvinism would make few converts among a courtly nobility. Yet while the political alliance between the higher orders of the established religion, and the cultivated noblesse, remains substantially intact, as it did in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in Pagan Rome from the days of Ennius to the Empire; and while the licenser denies the press to an innovator in thought, the saloons of a refined aristocracy are thrown open to him. Each rival patron glories in the number of his distinguished satellites; and where originality, genius, and inequalities of all description are in honour, there is but little regard for established systems. It is the pride of such assemblies, be they in Tusculan villas, in Medicean halls, in the Faubourg St. Germain, or on the lawns of Twickenham, to originate ingenious disputations on high topics, of which a difference of

opinion is the very soul.* The refined nobility join in the intellectual gladiatorship ; and thus, under the roof of their mansions, and in the villas of their protégées, there is a complete liberty of thought. In proportion as this mental exercise and freedom is inconsistent with the religion of the country, so is infidelity the more forced upon those who dare to think. And little are originality and audacity of innovation disliked, because they lead to disbelief ; for in a gay and dissipated aristocracy, the serious and the old are butts for polished ridicule ; and disbelief in religion comes to be looked upon as a standard for measuring strength of mind. There were many, I am persuaded, in France who professed themselves atheists only because atheism was fashionable. *6 new: Cas*

In scarcely any terrestrial thing, in any complication of simple causes which create one common phenomenon, can we say that there is not some evil and some good ; and so in those times of intellectual licence, which have been at once the glory and the shame of nations, great thoughts have been struck out by the clash of many cultivated minds ; though this exaltation of human wit has brought with it a denial of things and persons greater than human. It would be impossible for a candid mind to say that there was not some good and much evil in such a combination ; nor has any one a difficulty in marking which was the good and which the bad. But are there no means of avoiding the evil ? Cannot human wit be brought to its perfection without becoming irreligious ? *Regard*
Let us turn to the only example that has combined per- *uncontrolled*
manent religious faith with uncontrolled liberty of mental *by law*
innovation, and we would point out as a mark of the intimate connexion between the outward political adjustments and the state of thought, that this example, in which freedom of mind is blended with religious faith, is

* See on the saloons of Paris, Villemain, Hist. Lit. i. 21.

the same in which, what I have called the theocratic element, has blended with the other social elements in such a manner as to form a true constitutional monarchy. Mental has accompanied political fusion. The latter was effected by the process called the Reformation.

Regarded politically, the object sought and accomplished by the Reformation, was the subversion of the theocratic supremacy, the reduction of one social element that above all others maintained a lofty superiority. So far as this object was concerned, the effect was the same wherever the Reformation succeeded ; the spiritual were every where, in theory at least, put upon a level with the temporal powers. In countries where other circumstances have hitherto prevented a true constitutional monarchy, the theocracy became allied with the monarchy, as in Prussia and Denmark, or was subjected to the plutocracy, as in Venice and Holland. But in England, where the other powers have each been restrained from a permanent ἀρχή, the ministers of religion have taken their place, not in supremacy over, or in subordination to, but in co-ordination with the other powers. There are bishops who, in rank and station, are analogous to the peers of the country, except that on their death their honours descend not to their heirs but to their successors in office. There are archdeacons and parochial clergy of a hundred different degrees of wealth and importance, ranging themselves side by side with the country gentlemen among whom they are settled, their companions at the hunt, over the bottle, and on the magisterial bench ; and there are curates, drawn like the members of the bar and the officers of the army, from the class of younger sons ; and one day, by means of their industry or good fortune, to take their place in comfortable livings, or in the episcopacy. By such adjustments, the idea of religious ministers as a separate order of the state, linked together by a perpetual war with all the others, is removed, while sufficient unity and power are retained to enable them to assert their

right of existence against any hostile attacks. This is, in brief, the system which, begun at the Reformation, but not completely adjusted till after the restoration of Charles II., has enabled our country to effect the reconciliation of constitutional monarchy with the existence of an independent and unpretending clergy. Ours is called a State Religion, justly in one respect, that its ministers, like all other classes of the community, are amenable to the decisions arrived at by the assembled representatives of all the social powers; but there are other countries, to whose systems "state religion," in the sense in which it is sometimes intended, is far more applicable.

It is true, however, though it is daily becoming less true, that the English clergy is more suited for the aristocracy and the squirearchy than for the classes below them. Drawn in great measure from the ranks of gentlemen, the clergy still associate, it is true, chiefly with those who would have been their companions had they not taken orders. It is impossible to obviate this entirely; but the peasantry and town populations, if they wish for social intercourse with consecrated men, find a supply fully equal to the demand in the Methodist preachers who spring from the class whom they address. The wants of all classes are thus suitably supplied by different species of clergy appropriate to them. How far it is politic, as matter of statesmanship, to allow the clergy of the lower orders to be substantially unrecognised by the state, is a question of serious importance. For the maintenance of the Church of England in its present position, it is not indeed necessary that all English clergymen, or the Church as a body, should proclaim sympathy with democratic progress. It is enough if a large number of its ministers do so. The order will then not lose its respect with the great power which may at some time rise, if it pleases, and destroy every order that enlists against it. Aristocracy was not expelled from England when the Stuarts were. Why? Because the aristocrats

had not declared as a body for the monarch. The majority had, but there were enough aristocrats on the side of the Parliament to make the Commons feel that aristocracy was not their enemy. Hence it was spared the fate which it met in the French revolution, when the aristocrats sided, with some trifling exceptions, with the king, and had been for centuries the oppressors of the people. So, if the Church of England pursues its vital principle of developing sympathy with each new class in the state, let it continue to supply City Missions for the town artisans, and Puseyite parsons for the plutocracy, and it may yet float safely along on the everchanging surface of English society.

Protestantism, at least as understood in England since 1688, is the religion of toleration, and the commercial desire for toleration has therefore been able to satisfy itself without resorting to a secret hostility with the Established Church, as was the case in Italy. Science, too, and all the restless love of novelty which accompanies the rapid progress of the national mind, has sometimes given a rude blow to the doctrines of the Church; for Science adores Invention, and inventions in religion are errors. Every rood of ground reclaimed by knowledge diminishes the waste common of wonder and admiration; for in small effects and operations we cease to wonder when we have acquired the knowledge of the mode of working. As Spinoza says, "*Tum enim vulgus rem aliquam se satis intelligere existimat quum ipsam non admiratur.*" In this sense, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing;" but after we have inquired deeply and seen the whole of the great and complicated design of the Creator in action, then our wonder and devotion return. The more we reason, the more are we impressed with that deep-seated awe which always dwells on the mind of great discoverers, and which is nowhere more finely expressed than in Roubillac's statue of Newton in the ante-chapel of Trinity.

Our Church has met all these attacks arising from

knowledge, not, as in Rome, by forbidding inquiry, and decreeing that whatever science may have proved, the sun still goes round the earth ; but by a candid endeavour to meet and explain any apparent inconsistency between the doctrine of revelation and the conclusions of science ; for the Church of England acts on these occasions like an innocent prisoner, and courts inquiry, while that of Rome, like a guilty one, stifles it. The consequence naturally is, that in the first case men enter into the discussion amicably, and are pleased if they can effect a reconciliation between the old religion and the scientific novelties, a process continually necessary, as each new scientific truth is disclosed ; in the other, they writhe under the prohibition, and withdraw their belief from a creed, some of whose dogmas are manifestly inconsistent with the evidence of the senses and the conclusions of the reason. To take a part for the whole is a common failing of human nature, and when they found vulnerable points in this old system of mediæval pantheology which desired to be the universal science, they were apt to think it all alike decayed ; a conclusion to which the scandalous lives of the priests might, without any extremely sound logic, yet very naturally contribute. Shall we wonder, then, at the total irreligion of the refined Italian states, in the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries ? The Church required its followers to believe all its lore ; this was impossible, and there was but the other extreme left them—to believe none of it. Before the time of the Medici no one, says Naudé*, was accused of atheism in Italy ; or in France, before the time of Francis I., the restorer of letters. But the cultivation of Aristotle's physical and metaphysical works, proscribed by the Church ; of civil law, against which many a bull had been in vain directed ; of the Greek and Latin classics, which at last found their best patrons in the courts of those potentates

not in 1861

* *Considérations Politiques sur les Coups-d'état*, cap. iv.

whose infallible predecessors had forbidden their study to true churchmen ; of astronomy, of which, in the person of the imprisoned Galileo, the Church had signified its disapprobation ; of natural philosophy, whose earlier votaries had suffered as magicians ; of mathematics, whose disciples, like the later Jesuit editors of Newton, were obliged to publish their disbelief in the physical truths they demonstrated,—all this dishonest compromise, by those who professed to pay an external respect to the decrees of an obsolete pantheology, but who in effect gave way to the anarchy of thought which characterised the Italian acme, destroyed the vitality of all religious feeling, and led the way, not unnaturally, to that state of tacit indifference to all belief which prevailed in the cities of Italy in the time when their name was greatest, their genius most active, and their power most feared. For the ages of atheism and infidelity are invariably ages of great refinement*.

France, too, presented in the eighteenth century the same spectacle, for each of the three great causes of this phenomenon had in that country commenced to produce their common effect. First, the increase of commerce, and the rise of the citizens by commerce, and their adhesion to the Protestant faith, led, during the reign of Louis XIV., to a secret toleration of every creed at Paris. Then came the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a new seizure by the hierarchy of some of that power which was flowing from them ; but vainly, for in the saloons of Paris there was established that anarchy of thought which a noblesse can alone establish, and which is at constant war with every species of mental domination. An infidelity more open than that of Italy was the consequence of the attempted retention of ecclesiastical power, both political and mental, after the movement set forward by Descartes, had made freedom of thought and love of novelty a part of the French character.

* See Bacon, Essay xvii., of Superstition, who instances the time of Augustus.

It might naturally be expected that the Greeks and Romans, when their blind belief wore off, would rush at once into infidelity, for their creed could rely on faith alone, and could make no further appeal to the reason than to prove the existence of a superior Being. The Roman aristocracy long continued the rites of their ancient superstition, for they saw in them one of the mainstays of their power over the commons; but when an appeal to the reason, a conciliation between authority and common sense should if possible have been attempted, the falseness of their religion made it impracticable; and Roman civilisation, after the days of Ennius, presented the too common spectacle of an intolerant priesthood, and a nation in whom civilisation went hand in hand with infidelity to all religion.

England, too, has reached the period when no one principle, theological, metaphysical, or other, maintains a despotic domination over the minds of men, or assumes to control by persecution the liberty of their thoughts; and yet infidelity is not one of our characteristics. For in like manner as our constitution has reconciled the honour and pride of aristocracy with the freedom and enterprise of democracy, so has our Church confined authority to its due limits, and by contracting, strengthened its sway, so that with us Christian faith has survived that blind uninquiring readiness of belief, with whose decay in other countries came irreligion and open atheism. Protestantism, politically considered, is the spirit of constitutional government introduced into the affairs of the Church.

CHAP. XV.

THE GROWTH OF PLUTOCRACY.

"The awful shadow of some unseen power
Floats, though unseen, among us."—SHELLEY.

THE first political effect of commerce is to form a class of citizens, and endow them with sufficient wealth and power to become an important check on the ruling orders of the state; its second effect is to raise out of the citizens a plutocracy. The first must be performed before the national acme is attained; the second is in course of performance during the acme.

A plutocracy signifies "the rule of the wealthy," and is one of the forms of absolute government when there is no other power in the state to check it. It is unlike an aristocracy, in being founded, not on a difference of race or on ancient chieftainship, but on wealth acquired by commerce, by manufactures, by usury, and in some particular cases by rents from land; and the discrepancy in origin draws a line which may ever be distinguished between an aristocracy whose pride is in its blood, and a plutocracy whose boast is in its coffers. The first consider as derogatory any occupations but those of war, statecraft, and sometimes priestcraft; the others can hardly affect to despise the courses which enriched their immediate ancestors, and having nothing on which to pride themselves but their wealth, they display it in a profuse luxury.

From this distinction arises a well-known result. The feudal aristocrat lives in a rude pomp, affecting state more than luxury, and only when in attendance on the court of his sovereign tasting the pleasures of prodigal refinement. The city plutocrat lives in perpetual refinement and luxurious effusion of riches; for therein, in fact, consists the assertion of his being any other than a plain citizen. Out of this grow palaces and princely furniture, museums, galleries of pictures, collections of sculpture, concerts, operas, whereby the polished and well-educated descendant hopes to be a grade in the social scale above the coarse, money-making citizens, of whom his ancestor was one. He has the less objection to emerge thus visibly if his capital and his name are still in the business. Alfieri, with the assistance of Mr. Landor, contrasts the plutocracy of the Italian cities with the feudal noblesse of Piedmont in terms of sufficient strength: "I see no aristocracy in the children of sharpers from behind the counter, or, placing the matter in the most favourable point of view, in the descendants of free citizens who accepted from any vile enslaver, French, Spanish, German, or priest, or monk, the titles of counts and marquises. In Piedmont the matter is different: we must either have been the rabble or their lords; we were military, and we retain over the populace the same rank and spirit as our ancestors held over the soldiery."* But irrespective of this ambition to be other than a plain citizen, the beautiful is naturally an object of attraction to those whose occupations all tend to instil into them some considerable love of elegance and taste. The shopman has been selling splendid patterns, gorgeous furniture, elegant china, faultless drapery, costly vertu and bijouterie, all the toiling days

* Landor, *Imaginary Conversations*, i. 188. A feudal nobility regards a "citizen" as of an inferior order; the plutocrat, who lives in cities, holds "*magnifici cittadini*" to be as lofty a term as people can apply to any one; the poorer citizens he calls "*mezzo cito*," and for them reserves his hauteur.

of his life, and when he grows rich himself, will it not be a pleasure to him to buy a magnificent house, and furnish it with all the gorgeous array that he has been in the habit of selling to rich people? This sufficiently accounts for the great love of mere adornment and splendour; those who have a finer taste buy pictures and statues, and, we will hope, derive as keen a pleasure from the beauties of imitation as from the bare fact of possessing such costly and showy property. The old genuine aristocrat, on the other hand, values himself for himself, and not for his possessions. He glories in his strength of arm, his pride of descent, his loftiness of character, his valiant achievements, his scorn of mean traders. He delights in the sublime, the plutocrat in the beautiful.

Let, then, nobility and plutocracy be no longer confused. A distinction thus founded in nature manifests itself repeatedly to the inquirer by ethical as well as social and political characteristics; and a statesman who takes counsel of history should disdain to be dazzled by the tinsel affectation with which a plutocracy sometimes apes the outward form of an hereditary noblesse, or to be duped by the political arithmetician, when he preaches that the sole principle of aristocracy is hereditary wealth.

Again, plutocracies are themselves of various origin, and the difference of origin introduces a difference of character. Those which arise from manufactures, or by the use of money at low interest*, are more addicted to frugality; those which arise by commerce, or by the loan of money at high interest, are, on the contrary, more gene-

* "Nothing in the world will engage our merchants to spend less and trade more than the abatement of interest; for the subduing of interest will bring in multitudes of traders, as it has in Holland, to such a degree, that almost all the people of both sexes are traders; and the many traders will necessitate merchants to trade for less profit, and consequently be more frugal in their expenses, which is the true reason why many considerable merchants are against the lessening of interest."—*Child on Trade*, Pref. xv.

rous, diffuse, and prodigal ; the former make their wealth by small savings and calculations, and from this habit of pinching others contract one of pinching themselves. The latter receive their fortune by large instalments, by the huge payments of their debtors, or by a grand sale, as each happy cargo comes to port ; and after enabling them to pay all employed in the good enterprise with a liberal hand, leaves them a large surplus wherewith to indulge the magnificence of their own fancy, for men are ever more improvident and addicted to spend when their fortune comes in by jerks, as witness even the common sailor—the most improvident of the labouring classes—than when it increases at a steady rate. Out of this difference came, on the one hand, the plodding, coarse, niggardly, and minute Dutchman, who hated paintings, unless each brick was particularised therein ; on the other, the proud and gorgeous Venetian, in his marble palace, and his gallery filled with the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Paul Veronese and Titian.

Commerce is external and internal. It is natural that we should never have external commerce without some internal commerce ; but the variety of nature forbids that the two species should ever be mixed in any two instances in the same proportion.

The Venetians' commerce was, by force of their situation, nearly all external. That is, magnificent ; the owners of fleets treated on equal terms with the princes and nobles, who could not dispense with their trade and their money ; and the Venetians caught something of the spirit of those with whom they treated ; the name of merchant princes was not then ridiculous.

The Americans have both kinds of commerce—large external, but they have much larger internal commerce. Like the French of the present day, the common people are all petty traders ; they have, every one of them, some little gambling venture, and, in consequence, each man's hand is against his brother, unless he happen to be in the partnership. It is against such a kind of commerce that

the tirades so often launched vainly against commerce in general, might be most effectively pointed.

In the early ages of the Christian nations, artizans and handicraftsmen, members always of the subject race, were compelled to combine in order to exist. They lived in towns, and there established the guilds and corporations, which had for their chief object the safety of the workman and his master from the military noblesse. This arrangement was followed by another result,—that master, journeyman, and apprentice, all formed members, as it were, of one family. The master had begun as an apprentice, and having married the daughter of his master, did not refuse the hand of his own to an aspiring apprentice. These were happy days for the labouring classes, when the humblest might hope to rise by an easy and ascertained gradation to the highest places in their corporation, and when the proudest of the members did not seek to mingle with the military noblesse, or earn their companionship by scorning those from among whom they rose.

These guilds were the mainstay of a democratic resistance to monarchical and aristocratical absolutism; they embodied the citizen class, and gave its members the strength and influence which union alone can give.* But they did not create a plutocracy. That achievement was reserved for the altered system of large manufactures, where it would be hard for the master, however kind or generous, to establish between himself and his workmen any other relation than that of payer and payee. The wealth of the master and the poverty of the "hands" give to any advances by the former the air of patronage, from which the free spirit of the workman recoils, and domestic ties between them would be objects of ridicule and shame.

In this manner is the large capitalist in modern society

* "In early Rome there were guilds of artizans. The institution was ascribed to the remotest times. No quiritæ, still less a patrician, could belong to them."—*Niebuhr*, iii. 298.

so separated from his workmen, that his class forms a distinct order in the state. He is looked down upon as a vulgar parvenu by the old and refined aristocracy; he is removed by his wealth and wishes from all community of sentiments or ideas with his workmen. By one he is called a democrat, in its bad sense; by the other he is called an aristocrat, in its bad sense; and he is in reality a plutocrat. Were his class a small one in number, he would live insignificant, and his descendants would, if they retained their wealth, be absorbed into the landed aristocracy; but if his class is a large one, it becomes a new order in the state, at natural war with every other but the Crown.

Another way in which plutocracy arises is that of ancient Rome. The great plebeian houses, formed, as Savigny and Niebuhr hold, by marriages of disparagement, introduce into the inferior order of the state wealth and power, which is necessarily at war with the institutions by which their inferiority is established. While the patrician houses rejoiced in unencumbered lands and a numerous retinue of clients either gaining their livelihood by trade or living on their small allotment of arable land, the plebeian houses, comparatively few in number, could make but poor head against them; but gradually the patrician, like every other close body, declined, and the knights rose. They had originally been an order connecting the senate and the commons. They grew in numbers and in wealth, obtained in great measure by farming the revenues of the provinces. Four hundred plebeians were enrolled in the class of knights by Valerius, simply on account of their wealth; and Tiberius Gracchus gave his strongest blow to the power of the patricians, by transferring the judicial functions from them to the knights, who, as Montesquieu* insinuates, instead of being on the judgment seat, ought rather to have been placed before it,

* *Esp. des Loix*, xi. c. 18.

Of all methods of obtaining wealth, those which formed the plebeian knights * into a plutocracy have met with most censure. They were principally two ;—usury, which, (law! though in fashion now, Cato pronounced to be no better than highway robbery, and farming the provincial revenues, or lending out their capital on provincial taxes, which resulted in Roman history in becoming a system of infamous exaction ; the provincials were reduced to misery, and the public treasury impoverished, while a class of worthless and dangerous plutocrats attained sudden opulence. It is curious that though the laws of debtor and creditor in the early ages had brought odium on the rapacity of the patricians, there is not the slightest trace in the later ages of the republic of the patricians practising the degrading trade of usury which enriched so many of the plebeian knights.† This degeneracy did not come upon the patricians till later.‡ In proportion to the vileness of the means of elevation, was the vileness of the use made thereof. Honour was not a word in their vocabulary ; gain at any price was their sole end, and as they, unhappily for Rome, had usurped the tribunals, the injured provincials who came to Rome for justice against a member of this avaricious plutocracy, had to seek it, with what success may be anticipated, from the very order to which he belonged.

The example of Rome is curiously illustrated by that of France. While the ancient régime was still disastrously continued by the Bourbons long after the arrival of all the conditions of the acme except its government, a plutocracy by two several means came into existence. At first it was, like the plutocracy of Rome, formed by farming the revenues and defrauding the finances of the country. This

* The power of the capitalists is observable in Livy as early as the second Punic war, but it did not arrive at its height till a century later. —*Niebuhr, Hist. Rom.* iv. 266.

† *Niebuhr, Hist. Rom.* i. 564.

‡ *Niebuhr, Hist. Rom.* ii. 602.

had sooner brought things to a crisis in France, had not Colbert, with wonderful sagacity, persuaded Louis XIV. to establish an honest court of judicature for trying the offences of these financiers, and the king had the virtue to resist their splendid bribe. Whether Colbert took a lesson from Roman history I know not; but one cannot fail to be struck with his hitting the very point in which the Roman patricians failed: and though Colbert was no patrician, he happened to be a statesman desiring the honour and prosperity of his country. When the plutocrats came to be judges at Rome, they had won the day for their order; when Colbert carried the establishment of his courts in France, that species of plutocracy was checked for half a century, and never attained the absolute power possessed by the great capitalists of Rome.

But this same Colbert, finding the condition of society in his country ripe for large commercial and manufacturing enterprises, so framed his legislation as to encourage their growth. His manufactures flourished, and produced in France a second and more legitimate plutocracy, which ultimately sympathised by force of a natural harmony with the farmers-general of the revenue.

In northern Germany a plutocracy had been growing up by mortgaging the estates of the nobles in Holstein and South Sleswick. It often began by capitalists from Hamburg, Lubeck, Bremen, and other German towns, advancing money and putting in verpachters to superintend the farms which the old nobles were too proud or too indolent to cultivate with sufficient skill to make them profitable. These capitalists and their emissaries have come at last almost to oust the Holstein nobles out of the country, and the revenues they draw from these commercial speculations in the Duchies, have tended to the growth of a powerful plutocracy in Berlin and Vienna.*

* Laing's Denmark, pp. 55, 56. 148.

In fact, in all parts of Germany where there is not peasant proprietorship, the same change is now taking place as in ancient Rome. The land is ceasing to be regarded as the substratum for nobles, yeomen, and peasants to live upon, and is being repeopled with manufacturers, capitalists, and artisan cultivators ; the former owing all their prestige to the towns, and the latter having very little of the character of the ancient, leisurely, simple-minded peasant about them.

CHAP. XVI.

THE FUSION OF ARISTOCRACY AND PLUTOCRACY.

FROM the summits of the Alps the mountain torrent rushes incessantly through the gorges of the pass. I trace its stream in summer-time far down through the rich pastures, rapid still, but smooth and with smiling surface; further on the busy haunts of men are built upon its banks, and life moves safely on its tamed waters.

Such were its normal condition, consisting of three stages which, though their boundaries be not easily traced by the senses, are capable of being kept clearly distinct in the mind. The summer passes, and the snow of another year is heaped upon the snow of many winters. The torrent swells and rages past the pastures as fiercely as in its mountain homes; its impetuosity now lashes the masonry of the bridge, and overflows the gates of the dock. There is no more that intermediate stage between the torrent and the quiet river of civic life; they meet, the two extremes, and blend as best they may.

It is thus in many nations: as they float down the stream of progress they leave very gradually the old forms and feelings of aristocracy, and passing through fine and subtle shades of change, reach at last their plutocratic phase. The longer they are in the progress, more numerous and defined in most instances are the distinguishable stages through which they pass from one extreme to the other, and so in my esteem the fuller and

more perfect is their development. But others have no intermediate stage, and pass with the abruptness of our stream in winter straight from aristocracy into plutocracy.

Of the slow and more elaborate development as it reaches down to plutocracy, some of the steps are traced elsewhere. I wish in this chapter to note three instances of abrupt passage, where one extreme blends at once into the other.

There is in history no instance of this predicament so striking and instructive as that afforded by the illustrious States of mediæval Italy. In most of them a feudal aristocracy had existed for uncertain duration, and with various fortunes, in castles and lordly domains, with retinues of vassals, devoted to the pursuits of war and the chase, and bearing in its every feature the traces of its Teutonic origin. A sudden change succeeds. In one moment the aristocracy has abandoned all its ancient character, its love of war, its scorn of trade, and its lawless rapacity. It takes up its abode in the cities, now contemned no more. Titles perhaps may be retained, but they are a badge of nothing but wealth, for every family as it gets rich may buy one and be equal with the proudest, when every taste of an old hardy warrior aristocracy is gone, and their estates and their farms are no more to be lived upon, but merely to produce them rents. And those to whom rents are insufficient open their banks, and spread their money-tables, without a thought of degradation. Refinement too comes speedily upon them. Costly and gorgeous palaces arise at the bidding of these merchant nobles, with statues, gems, and picture-galleries resounding with the discussions of scholars and enlivened by the wit of accomplished women.

What is this but the sudden transformation of an aristocracy into a plutocracy? So it was in Sienna, and, with interposition of a few rapid half-developed phases of social change, in most of the little states of Italy. And thus,

amid a world of soldier-nobles and ignorant serfs, Italy became in the twelfth century the salt of the earth.

In Venice after the Huns retired the old noblesse of the continent then become city plutocrats, remained in their ocean dwellings, and sought not to rebuild the smoking ruins of the farm-castles on their ancestral estates. The cultivators of the soil and the small farmers returned and rendered their rents to the noblesse, who lived in the city; and it was perhaps at the time of the resumption of their ancient wealth, that they joined with the merchants who had grown rich by trade while Attila was still in Lombardy, in forming that solid and jealous oligarchy that, thanks to the Adriatic, endured till the close of the last century.*

All over Italy, wherever this change from the condition of a rural noblesse to a city life took place, the wealth of these new settlers in the cities consisted at first in the rent that was paid them from their estates, and this was often paid in kind and stored in their town palazzo, whose prodigious size, which now astonishes the traveller whether in Bologna, Padua, Venice, or Florence, is to be explained by the necessity of having a large warehouse underneath the palatial suite of apartments. Many of them sold their wine and corn in retail from their palaces, others thought it more becoming a merchant prince to put their stores all on board ship, and sell them in another part of the world.

The state of Sienna underwent the same social change as many of its prouder neighbours. Weavers of wool and silk, expelled from Lombardy, worked their way honestly with the native bourgeois to some little wealth and power. The nobles in their country castles kept

* There seems some discrepancy of opinion as to the origin of the titled order of Venetians between M. de Sismondi (*Rep. Ital.* ch. v.) and M. Daru (*Hist. de Venise*, lib. xxxix.) But it ought not to be forgotten, that for the first two centuries and a half of its independent existence the Venetian constitution was a pure democracy.

aloof from the vulgar rich of the town, and invoked foreign interference to curb these arrogant plebeians, but with little avail. At last, growing poorer and poorer, they determined to come into the town, and laying aside their pride of birth embraced trade, and called themselves simple Peter the Hosier, Paul the Silk-Weaver, and as they grew rich by trade, built city palaces. The burghers in turn, to be their equals, bought a title, and so in Sienna, aristocracy, with little tarrying on the road, found its way into plutocracy. It carried its titles with it, but they were empty baggage, to please their owners and deceive the ignorant; and accordingly they have succeeded in deceiving more than one political philosopher.

We have no right to mock at these ancient merchants for their love of titles, when we remember the world in which they lived. In all Gothic Europe a trader was scorned by the military nobles for a Jew, or a runaway Gideonite. These wealthy men as they paced the Broglio remembered that they had ancient and honourable blood in their veins, and knew that they provided the sinews of war to the proud barbarians who had no wealth but their swords, their half-cultivated lands, and their half-naked serfs. They were refined, educated, and in all but valour the superiors of the feudal nobility around them, but that nobility would not own them for equals unless they bore the patrician insignia. Thus the plutocracies of mediæval Italy, rather to sustain their due position than from paltry affectation, called themselves Marquises and Counts. Holland had no such need, for Europe had, before the time when Holland reached its acme, shaken off much of its exclusive reverence for aristocracy, and had discovered that there was something to admire even in a plain citizen. In our days still less of such necessity remains, and an assumption of titles by a nation of traders, such as the United States of America, would be rightly ascribed to the lowest motives of vulgar vanity.

The Dutch provinces, after their emancipation from the Spanish yoke, present an example of the same social change as that which marked the early period of the Italian cities; with this difference, however, that the aristocracy did not so readily become merchants themselves, but rather fitted themselves to fill the municipal offices side by side with the enriched merchants and their posterity, not as old feudal rulers each with his separate county, but as co-trustees of the common-weal for the good of the wealthy order. Riches accumulated less rapidly at first, and the nobles, impoverished by the war and the Spanish exactions, were forced, in great measure, to rely upon their public salary for the means of sustaining a due appearance. Thus, at the first epoch of Dutch independence, they laid aside all distinction of every sort and affected to be citizens, and even after wealth and luxury had supervened, it was long the fashion to retain the ancient simplicity of manners. While the old aristocracy thus merged into a governing plutocracy, we learn from Sir W. Temple* that the favourite ambition of the Dutch trader was like that of his brethren at Genoa, to found a fortune and educate his children in a manner befitting them to enter that class and take part side by side in municipal office with the descendants of the old counts. And, indeed, the trader himself not seldom in Italy, and still more systematically in Holland, took a place in the councils of the state; an arrangement by which the states that admitted traders as statesmen profited much, as far as their trade was concerned, for none knew better with whom it would most advantage trade to make peace or war than the leading councillors.†

* Observations on the United Provinces, chap. 4. I am aware that the aristocracy had, in the Dutch scheme of government, one separate vote, but this was a mere mechanical adjustment to secure the good working of the governmental machine, and does not indicate, what is not the fact, that the aristocracy remained a separate social order.

† See Child on Trade, p. 2.

And as in Venice and Genoa, so in Holland, the candidates for admission to the plutocracy required two qualifications. Wealth was necessary to enable them to aspire to public functions, and public functions were the portal to the oligarchy. At Venice it was wisely written over that portal that they who entered should leave behind all hope of acquiring further wealth; but Daru* tells us that this was not strictly observed. Indeed, if it had been, the new families would often have outstripped the older.

The same process is to be traced in the history of ancient Rome. The plebeians originally formed a class correlative to the yeomen of modern times. In the progress of Roman civilisation, some of the plebeians became as rich, or richer, than the patricians; others oppressed with poverty sold their little estates and took their place among the poor of the city. The patricians gradually lost their ancient supremacy over the rich plebeians, and at the time of the Gracchi the division in Roman society was no longer between patrician and plebeian, but between a plutocracy, composed of old patricians and of rich plebeians, and a democracy oppressed with poverty. There was no other division between the population, except that of wealth. The effort of C. Gracchus was to render the constitution adapted to the social conditions of the state. There was substantially no difference between the patricians and the equites; his aim was, therefore, to equalise them, and to give to the plutocracy thus constituted, the constitutional power which he thought it expedient to take away from the then corrupt democracy.†

But though aristocracy has thus easily fused into plutocracy upon occasion, it does so only when it has lost its true and primitive character of eminence. The pomp of early

* Hist. de Venise, p. 469.

† Niebuhr, Hist. Rom. iv. 329. 345. As to the infusion of Latins to form a new middle class, see the same passages.

aristocracy (out of which the monarchy is but a slight excrescence) belongs to the strongest, most brave, most frank men as theirs of right. Pomp and ceremony are but badges of a distinction which has its foundation in nature. They win perhaps meretriciously some additional respect and awe from the folly of mankind, but respect and awe sufficient would be paid to those aristocrats had they nothing but the chastened pomp of a sword in their right hand, and a shield on their left arm. As order and civilisation increase, their pomp is retained and increased while it loses its political significance, and those who display themselves in it become less and less worthy of any distinction. At last when plutocracy arises, who is he that stalks beneath the gilded robe, that bears a coronet upon his head, and calls himself an aristocrat? A common man, just one of those who are moving all about him; in no way distinguished by culture, by strength, by character, or anything but an accident of birth, from the plutocrat whose father swept the shop. He has shrivelled downward toward the ordinary level of citizens; the plutocrat has risen a little above it. They meet upon a common table-land. Both love pomp and glitter, because they can afford it, and it is all that shows them to be other than common citizens. There is but one thing wanting: let the aristocrat lay aside his title, as he did at Sienna; or let the plutocrat buy or work for a title, as he did at Genoa and Venice; or let the two call themselves nobles, and all who are poorer commoners, and then the fusion is accomplished.

There are upon the whole three different modes in which this fusion takes place—the difference being simply caused by the degree of perfection of the national development. In a nation of brief and rapid development, the intervening stages are passed through almost imperceptibly; the aristocracy becomes *en masse* a plutocracy: of that I have given instances in this chapter. In a more slow development the plutocracy grows up—distinct from

and hostile to the old patricians, who maintain their own ; that was the case in Athens, in Rome, in France, and twenty other places ; and has ended always in the annihilation of the aristocracy as an independent body, and the absorption of the individual relics of it into the court plutocracy. Last comes the slowest development, when the plutocracy, as it forms itself, is individually drawn into the ancient aristocracy, and in a second generation is not to be distinguished from it. As in the other fusions aristocracy is absorbed, in this, on the other hand, plutocracy is, for a time at least, absorbed into aristocracy. Of this I purpose to speak in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVII.

PLUTOCRACY IN ENGLISH LIFE.

"Every free constitution goes like ourselves through life towards death; whatever moderates its consuming rapidity, whatever produces obstacles which require time to overcome, prolongs its existence. But a state has this advantage over an individual, that by constantly raising in an ever-increasing circle more persons to its highest freedom, it can carry back its life, and more than once, to youth, and live through it again with fresh energy."—NIEBUHR.

"Length of days be in her right hand, and in her left riches and honour: may her ways be the ways of pleasantness and all her paths be peace."

COMPROMISE is the principle of the British constitution, and it is so because fusion is the characteristic of British life. Everywhere else each social order is comparatively clear and easy to be distinguished and defined. In England all classes, orders, ranks, and distinctions run into and blend with each other in a manner which excites the admiration of those who contemplate, and the despair of those who would describe it. For the one know that this complexity, this universal interlacing, and the consequent anomalies, are the surest guarantee against absolutism of every description, and the others feel their hearts sink within them when they would pourtray every thread in such a tangled web.*

* This fusion and balance of all the social elements is a mark of the national acme, and I have endeavoured to indicate it by crossing the lines which, in the scheme in page 96, indicate the social forces. In England, where the acme is more fully developed than in any other country, this characteristic is the more conspicuous.

But a distinction should here be made between complexity of social life and complexity of government. When the former exists the latter generally follows, but often a very complicated governmental machine—as in Sparta, in Venice, in France under the restored Bourbons, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the United States of America—is devised to provide, ineffectually enough, those checks against absolutism, whether democratic, despotic, or of whatever other kind, which the simplicity of the social life fails to give. In England all the constitutional potentates are representatives of real interests in the country, and the complications of our constitution arise from and reflect the complications of our social order.

Plutocracy has not been in England a distinct and hereditary order ; it has not grown up among us by any of the simple methods enumerated in the last Chapter, it has neither entirely grown out of enriched citizens, as in Athens, nor entirely by means of trading nobility, as in some towns of Italy ; but so far as there is a plutocracy in England it has resulted from a union of the two—the younger branches of the noble houses meeting on equal terms with the more successful citizens, and forming no hereditary order of plutocrats, but supplying new families to the old aristocracy of the country.

Let us suppose that in England the aristocracy had for these four or five centuries gone on, like the old aristocracies of the continent, producing children, every one of whom was noble and above all professional or gainful occupations except those of war and haply of the church. Let us suppose the consequent division or encumbrance of the estates of the aristocracy, the proportional diminution of individual means with the increase of the titled individuals, the consequent dependence of the greater portion of the class upon public functions, and the consequent subserviency to the Crown and the Minister. Let us suppose that the old merchants of England, the Childs, the

Greshams, and even to come down to our age, the Thelusions, the Beckfords*, the Jones Loyds, the Heathcotes, the Peels, the Strutts, had in their turn transmitted to their descendants immense and increasing wealth, and an hereditary antipathy to the old aristocracy. Let us imagine the natural consequences that in every struggle between the aristocratic and democratic elements these wealthy families would have sided against their hereditary foes, and produced the unequal contest of an over-numerous and impoverished aristocracy matched against wealthy and educated families well fitted for government, a turbulent democracy, and possibly an ambitious sovereign. Let us put this case, imaginary only when placed upon English ground, but a true representation of the stern reality in France, in Rome, in Athens, in Florence, and in some measure in Spain and Germany, and then ask why this disastrous contest and its necessary catastrophe has not been witnessed in England, and the natural solution will be furnished by the peculiar construction of the English aristocracy. The principle of primogeniture has saved us from a caste of aristocrats, and by thus modifying the peculiar frame of our social existence has modified the constitution which is the effect and the manifestation of our social existence.

The simple history of the aristocracies on the continent of Europe has been that of a caste, at first powerful by their domains, which their swords had won, holding themselves aloof from trade, and despising it as the occupation of Jews and runaway serfs. As these haughty families increased their estates became less able to support them. Two alternatives were then open: the first was to resort to public functions, not for the dignity or glory of holding them, but for the salary, whence arise a multi-

* The family of the slopseller Beckford, after producing the illustrious author of "Vathek," who showed the gorgeous tastes of a plutocrat at Fonthill, was ultimately absorbed into the noble race of Hamilton.

tude of sinecures, in countries where the caste of aristocracy has thus overgrown, as in France in the eighteenth century, and the gradual exchange of the useful independence of the nobility for the subserviency of courtiers. Then nothing remains but their titles, their privileges, and their hauteur, which easily degenerates into insolence, for when the spirit of an independent aristocracy has fled, every good that belongs to that institution departs likewise. In the other alternative, the whole impoverished nobility, unable longer to live in the enjoyment of their feudal and territorial privileges, or to maintain their due state and position upon their estates, rush headlong into commerce, using the small relics of their hereditary fortune as capital with which to begin trade. This was the course pursued in mediæval Italy and in Holland.

The English aristocracy has steered between the two courses. The elder sons, succeeding to the quasi-feudal rights and privileges of their feudal ancestors, keep aloof from all professions and occupations, except those of the soldier, the sailor, or the statesman. The younger sons embark in professions, or the higher kinds of trade, and bring with them, from their ancestral homes, a higher feeling and a loftier tone than would be found among the classes in which they mingle, if those classes were all composed of the sons of small traders; and when they have made their fortunes in the professions, they found families themselves, and take their place, if not alongside of their elder brothers, yet among the landed gentry of the nation.

Many a great exploit, many a life of enduring energy has been inspired and sustained by the determination of some impoverished being to redeem the fallen fortunes of his family. The readers of Macaulay will remember his description of Warren Hastings. His paternal estate at Daylesford had been sold to strangers. He determined to recover it. "When under a tropical sun he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics, his hopes, amidst all the cares of war, finance,

and legislation, still pointed to Daylesford. And when his long public life, so singularly chequered with good and evil, with glory and obloquy, had at length closed for ever, it was to Daylesford that he retired to die."

In 1669, when the French aristocracy* was becoming too numerous to maintain its ancient independence, and when public functions were being multiplied merely to stow away the younger branches of the nobles, a wise edict was published by Louis XIV. proclaiming maritime commerce not derogatory to the noblesse.† This salutary provision, which it would seem was rendered inoperative in France by the vanity of the noblesse, gave them the opportunity of entering into commerce by the same road which had been traversed originally with so much of glory by the noblesse of the Italian republics, and afterwards by the English nobility and landowners. For the time is hardly to be discovered when adventures of mingled sea-fight and commerce were scorned by the higher classes in England. The Danes and Saxons, who furnished the layer of gentlemen next below the Norman nobility, originally gained their fortunes by maritime ad-

* The French aristocracy weathered the storm longer than those of Germany and many parts of Italy, by reason of its similarity in one respect to the English. The estates of the barons were not divided among their children as in Germany and parts of Italy, but descended to the eldest son. (Machiavelli On the Constitution and Affairs of France.) The younger had therefore to seek their living in the king's service. This in time led to the vast number of sinecures which burdened the state. So that in the end the French nobility fell because the younger sons would not betake themselves to commerce, or marry the daughters of rich citizens—while the elder neglected their estates, squandered their rents in Paris, and sold portions of their property to peasant proprietors.

† It authorised "*tous gentils-hommes à prendre part dans les vaisseaux marchands, denrées et marchandises d'iceux, sans être censés déroger à noblesse, pourvu qu'ils ne vendent point en détail.*" Montesquieu (liv. xx. c. 21, 22), objected to the trading of the nobility as liable to weaken the strength of the monarchy. Henault (*Abrégé Chronol. de l'Histoire de France*, an 1669,) says that Montesquieu had changed his mind upon this point before he died.

venture, often mere war, though sometimes with an admixture of trade, and the taste for it remained in the race in their new insular homes. In other countries, more military by position and taste, the baron had to furnish from his retainers a little army to act under the orders of the king, in the same way as our Earl of Rivers, when he went to aid Ferdinand and Isabella in the war of Granada, took with him "a beautiful train of household troops, 300 in number, armed after the fashion of their land with long-bow and battle-axe."* But the spirit and loyalty of the English nobleman was often more appropriately directed to providing and manning at his own expense little armadas to carry on the battle of his sovereign; and it was held no disgrace if his bold sailors, following the Spaniards and the Portuguese, enriched their master with a cargo of the productions of the Indies, obtained sometimes by bargaining and sometimes by fighting. This stimulated the ambition of persons less wealthy to fit out expeditions, armed perhaps for their own defence, and ready enough to do battle against the enemies of their king, but having for their chief object a traffic with the countries where the Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians enriched themselves, and thus taking advantage of a hardy race of seamen, they pushed their argosies as far as the Canary isles and Brazil, they fished off Newfoundland, and brought home from the Mediterranean the products of India. They first of other nations followed the Spaniards to the New World and the Portuguese to India. The most enterprising of our commercial adventurers in the Elizabethan period sprung from the race of nobles. Scarce a company of merchants for foreign trade was formed without having two or three earls subscribing largely to the speculation.†

* Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 200.

† See Hakluyt, *passim*. Burgon's Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham, i. 47 *et passim*. The Earls of Cumberland and Essex, Sir Richard Greenville, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir

Thus English citizens alongside of English landowners enriched themselves by maritime enterprise. It is curious to remark the various modes and fashions by which commerce conducted on a grand scale has enriched those who pursued its occupations in England. First, perhaps by these sea-exploits, afterwards by East India adventure ; at the close of the seventeenth century by banking, and now by the last three combined with large manufactures, and speculations of almost every description ; and yet whatever the method and means of making wealth, the result has hitherto been among us, not the foundation of an hereditary plutocracy, but the addition of new families to the classes of noblemen and landed gentry ; whether it was Sir Joshua Child who rose from being an apprentice to marry his daughter to the Duke of Beaufort, whether it was Charles Duncombe who by banking made his one of the richest families in England, whether it was Sir Thomas Kitson " mercer of London," who in the reign of Henry VIII. erected the magnificent Hengrave Hall in Suffolk, the result has always been that the capital made in the counting-house or in Westminster Hall has been laid out on the domain, and amid beautiful woods and waters a splendid mansion has arisen, inhabited in the second generation by gentlemen and ladies as rural and thoroughly English in their tastes as the most pure-blooded descendant of a Norman baron or a Saxon earlman.

In the first generation the manners of the nobles may have been assumed unnaturally to make those with whom the enriched citizen associated forget the recent origin of the family ; but what was unnatural in the first generation became natural in the second.

There are few things that more interest an Englishman

Robert Dudley, Thos. Cavendish, among many other noblemen and gentlemen, fitted out squadrons at their own expense and sailed to all parts of the world in the reign of Elizabeth. The ship-money levied in 1630, was based on the custom of providing naval contingents for the king's service.

than the unbiassed opinion of foreigners respecting his country. In 1418, a native of the Florentine territory accustomed to the luxury of Italian city palaces and the splendour of Papal courts, himself secretary to several Popes, visited England. Poggio Bracciolini describes the secret of our English civilisation in words that are as appropriate now as they were four centuries and a half ago. "The nobles of England deem it disgraceful to reside in cities, and prefer living in retirement in the country. They estimate the degree of a man's nobility by the extent of his estates. Their time is occupied in agricultural pursuits, and they trade in wool and sheep, not thinking it at all derogatory to their dignity, to be engaged in the sale of the produce of their lands. I have known a wealthy merchant, who had closed his mercantile concerns, invested his money in land, and retired into the country, become the founder of a noble race, and I have seen him freely admitted into the society of the most illustrious families. Many persons also of ignoble blood, have been advanced to the honours of nobility by the favour of their sovereign, which they have merited by their warlike achievements."*

In fact, the English gentleman is a creature of this fusion: he has his like in no other country in the world. Either the whole land is retained by the noblesse as in countries where the feudal system maintained its vigour, or as in ancient Rome the bulk of the agricultural and landholding classes is thrown into the plebeian element because the patrician will not admit any of them. It was the practice among the conquering aristocracies of antiquity, followed to a great extent by the original aristocracies of the Gothic nations, to allow the chief men of the old régime, whether the heads of clans or the potentates of a former aristocracy, to retain some large portion of their possessions and hold a subaltern rank between

* Shepherd's Life of Poggio, p. 140.

the new aristocrat and the serfs, whose allegiance was transferred from old to new masters. These persons were denominated *περιτοιχοί**, viz. those allowed to dwell around the citadel or seat of government, but not within it, and shorn of every portion of sovereignty and every public function; nothing was reserved to them except a sometimes invaded security for their property. This class soon learnt to look upon those below them as fellow-sufferers from the sway of the new aristocracy, and thus when the broad line of patrician and plebeian was formed, their whole influence was cast into the plebeian scale, and helped to form a plutocracy more rapidly than it could have arisen from the civic element alone.† Thus the germ of our minor country gentlemen (some of whom sprung from the despised Saxon nobility) was by the system of the ancient aristocracies made anti-aristocratic, while with us those classes are aristocratic so far as to desire the maintenance of the constitution and a retention of an hereditary aristocracy, from which they often spring, and into which they may themselves hope to enter. So that both the class of country gentlemen and the individual gentleman have in England characteristics unknown elsewhere. They have much of the aristocrat, and much of the negotiant about them. The English gentleman places his delight and his amusements in the management of his estates, and in the quasi-feudal tribute of respect that is paid among us to the possessors of large landed

* See on the *περιτοιχοί* being employed as soldiers on board ship (marines) among the Greeks. Arist. Pol. lib. 7.

† See Niebuhr's (H. R. i. 403; ii. 304) remarks on the *demus* of antiquity. The nobility of the conquered and ceded towns, such as the Mamillii, Papii, Cilnii, Cæcinæ, all formed part of the Roman plebs. The commotions which led to the Rutilian laws and to the appointment of *decemvirs*, arose from the pretensions of the higher class of the plebeians to more freedom and a due share of civil offices. (Niebuhr, H. R. ii. 593.) The plebeian honours were only granted to tradesmen on condition of renouncing trade. Country tribes were superior to the city tribes. (Niebuhr, H. R. iii. 296—304.)

property ; he has a feeling of traditional honour ; he has ancestors whom he may disgrace, a posterity whom he may ruin ; but he deems it no degradation to have a share in a commercial speculation ; he objects not to work the mines on his estate, or to take shares in the railroad that passes through it ; and he finds a worthy pride in applying the newest discoveries to the cultivation of his lands and the improvement of his herds. He is in part Norman seigneur, in part man of business ; but his tastes and amusements belong rather to the former than the latter. In him remains the old country feeling which has always prevailed in a nation during its days of liberty and greatness, and which when it perishes is succeeded by ruin and decay. Country occupations produce robust bodies, jovial and hospitable tempers, high-minded conduct, sturdy characters, a large measure of the piety of domestic life, and a community of sentiments between the higher and the humbler classes. Nothing binds so much as the love of the same amusements. The peasant, though he rides no fine hunters, enjoys and after his fashion partakes the pleasure of a hunt. It is not above his comprehension, nor is his presence considered a degradation or an absurdity, as it would be at an in-door amusement.* Though he may not shoot game without a license, he can sympathise and be amused by the nobleman's or the squire's sporting, and do something on his own account among the smaller birds, while his rustic games and exercises receive the encouragement, and above all the presence and not seldom the participation, of the country-loving gentlemen. A town plutocracy have hardly the means, if they had the wish, of cultivating the same sympathy between classes. The unknown workman makes the furniture and prepares the luxuries, but he cannot be asked to participate in the pleasures they convey to

* The times were when even in the in-door amusements of the baron's hall, his dependants were not thought unseemly.

their owner, or even to be a silent spectator of those pleasures. All communications which can be established by town plutocracies consist in visiting the cottager, giving him lectures, or providing him with the means for a rustic holiday; in all which, however kindly intended and conducted, the line between rich and poor, between refined and coarse, is never forgotten, as it is in the common sympathy elicited in a participation in rough rural sports. That which the country seigneur performs as an habitual duty, the rich townsman performs as a spontaneous act of charity. The difference is not much to the giver, but it has a vast moral effect upon the receiver. It is a painful, but it seems a necessary conclusion, that money spent in the luxury of town mansions and suburban villas contributes very little to the happiness or the welfare of the labouring classes. It is the burden of the Socialists (who are all, except their orators, town operatives) that the persons who produce the wealth derive no enjoyment from it. This was not the case when the surplus rents of the seigneur were spent in the rude hospitality of his board, at which those who produced consumed. Plutocracy is thus assailable, and not seldom assailed on two grounds. Some think the means by which it obtains its wealth is not always conducive to the good of the state; and a still more numerous class objects to the way in which it spends its wealth. The tastes of the Italian, the Dutch *, the French†, or the American plutocrat, are all in-door and

* It is common to suppose that Holland was always a frugal democracy. It was so in its first days of independent existence, but towards the close of the seventeenth century a shrewd observer of men and manners, himself born in Holland, remarked of the Dutch: "In pictures and marble they are profuse; in their buildings and gardens they are extravagant to folly In all Europe you shall find no private buildings so sumptuously magnificent as a great many of the merchants' and other gentlemen's houses are in Amsterdam, and some other great cities of that small province."—*Mandeville, Table of the Bees, Remark Q.* Ed. 1728, p. 206. The remains of this grandeur still exist.

† The head-quarters of a nineteenth century French family is the hotel in Paris, not the old chateau of the early days of aristocracy,

civic. Gorgeous furniture, marble palaces, magnificent conservatories, huge hotels, resplendent cafés, and every means of ostentatiously displaying wealth, are to him preferable to retiring on his fortune into the remote country, and enjoying the hearty sports and athletic exercises of the open fields. The health of the plutocrat requires that he should retire for the summer months from the city. If a Venetian, he retires to his villa on the Brenta; if a Dutchman, to his "lust en rust" * house, bounded by four straight canals, three of them stagnant; if a German, to his hotels at Swinnemunde, Spä, and Baden; if an American, to his still grander hotels at Saratoga and Newport. The life of such places is a life of perfect idleness. They play at cards and billiards, lounge, flirt, and eat, without the performance of a single duty, or the expression of the slightest sympathy with their fellow-creatures in humbler walks of life. There is not the atmosphere of reflection or of thought. They who live there are of two classes;—either, spent with city business, they abandon themselves to idleness and luxury, in the hopes of recruiting their jaded faculties, or, habituated to luxurious sloth, they seek in a new hotel and a new watering-place the excitement of some novel pleasure, some keener stimulant to sympathies and tastes by long indulgence blunted against the pleasurable effects of slight amusements.

The difference is conspicuously reflected in the two celebrated works entitled "The Seasons,"—the one by Thomson, the other by Saint-Lambert. The latter, as

when the baron lived upon his estates, surrounded by his tenantry and spent his wealth among them. What remains of the old aristocracy in France has become a plutocracy. The desertion of the country began so early as the time of Henry IV., in the middle of the eighteenth century it was general. De Tocq. *L'Anc. Régime*, p. 185.

* Meaning pleasure and ease. The canals of Holland are bounded by these villas of the plutocracy of the towns; some also, smaller and humbler, belonging to the middle class citizens.

Villemain notices*, has no other idea about winter, except that it brings Voltaire's tragedies, the operas, and the suppers of Paris. When he has to paint a seigneur, he is either a gallant or a philosopher; and he does not distress his readers with the misery of the peasants.

Whoever would portray an English gentleman has altogether a different model to sketch from. With the Englishman the country seat is a centre of affections and of business even more than of pleasures. He performs without pay part of the administrative duties of the neighbourhood, which, in America, and on the continent of Europe, are performed by paid functionaries, whose poverty often makes them time-serving and corrupt, while office has its known effects on parvenus. The merely living on his estate would lead an English gentleman from the most selfish motives to spread happiness around; for no one likes to live in the midst of wretchedness and discontent when he has the means of surrounding himself with happy faces. The town plutocrat dresses and feeds his servants well. The country gentleman extends his prospect to the cultivators of his estates. The master of the factory, however kind his heart, often has not the pecuniary means to raise the wages of his workmen to the sum which he would wish to pay; and even when he does pay liberally, he has not, as matters at present stand, sufficient hold over his workmen to prevent their spending his donations in drink and dissipation. The English plutocrat of the more ambitious sort, unlike his fellows elsewhere, does not delight in this luxurious indolence, but anxiously saves enough to transform him into a country gentleman, and there performs the duties of his station often more ably and efficiently than those who were born to it. To him, and those aspiring to be like him, as well as to the born country gentlemen, I would commend the serious study of an essay written by a noble-

* Cours de Litt. Fr. ii. 342. - 356. "Les salons avaient tant de grace qu'on n'avait pas le pénétrer pour regarder les champs."

man early in the seventeenth century.* It is entitled: "Of a Country Life." In it are laid down canons of conduct, by following which our men of great estate have contributed for two centuries, and may for two centuries more contribute to maintain institutions which are the principal bulwark of English liberty and order. "The man of great quality and estate," says Lord Chandos, "is not only to prevent ill, but to do good, and that first by his example, in equally bearing part of the burthen, in country services, with the rest of the gentlemen. . . . If he be of a condition prepared with integrity, then to declare his ability in country services . . . will make the rest more wary in their steps and diligent in the uprightness of their endeavours. But allow his carriage never so clear, if it be either affected or smell of ostentation, so that one may discern either of these to be the spur of his endeavours, his labour is lost, will be imputed to him for vain-glory, and put upon the account of his disgrace."

Those among us who most nearly resemble the rich plutocracies of America and Venice in their mode of life are the wealthy idle families with no country seats, who prefer vegetating in the luxurious gaiety and the ceremonious piety of Brighton and Belgravia to passing a life of simple but stately usefulness on a country estate; and those who are like unto the poorer plutocracies, actually flee from England, and live amid the cheap fashion of Florence or of Brussels, finding in the kindred habits and tastes of the idle ostentatious plutocracies of these towns more ties of sympathy than in the hearty, healthy life of aristocratic and busy England.

Town life has increased vastly in England during this century, but not so much from any taste for it as from its neces-

* In the *Horæ Subsecivæ*, printed in London 1620, without the author's name, but ascribed by Dr. Lort to Grey Lord Chandos, who died in 1621.

sity. The country gentleman has not deserted his family seat for his city palace, but the increase of population has driven the surplus country stock into the towns. Those who are successful go back to the country richer and happier; those who are unsuccessful and unambitious live a cheap dingy life on small returns, or on purchased annuities. The successful merchant of Liverpool buys an estate in Staffordshire, and Liverpool knows him no more; it is his junior partners, his clerks and his factory people, or those who have had losses and got sick of trade that linger in the town, and live there either by their labour or on a small competence. And this has not been a mere matter of sentiment or ambition with the English merchant; but in days gone by, at least, if not at present, land has always appeared to the owner of large sums of money the best investment for it. For though it may not yield so large an immediate interest as many commercial speculations, the value of landed property has been constantly increasing.* In France, most parts of America, probably also in Holland, the purchase of land is a bad investment. So that town life in England has hitherto been very different from the life of the luxurious capitals of the ancient, the continental, or the American plutocracies. Our towns are the permanent residence of the poorer among the middle classes; the country contains the head-quarters of the rich. So long as that distinction remains we shall be neither like the Americans, who always speak not of their country but of their city; nor will our metropolis, though it contains the population of an empire, take the rank in England that Paris does in France. It were the best wish of

* Sir Josiah Child, about 1660, wrote: "I am so far from designing to ingross trade, that I am hastening to convert what I can of my small estate that is personal into real, supposing it my interest so to do, before the use of money falls, which I conclude cannot long suspend, and that then the land and houses must rise."—*New Discourse of Trade*, p. 81.

an English subject that London long may be the largest and the least of capitals.

With us then plutocracy fuses with aristocracy, but not, as in the cities of Italy, by aristocracy sinking into plutocracy, but rather by plutocracy entering into and increasing the strength of aristocracy, and by the fact that aristocracy is not with us a caste, but runs into and blends with the classes below it, so that though the line may be drawn between the titled and untitled, it is impossible to say where the aristocracy ends ; for there are many untitled families by antiquity and glory of descent, by right of large territorial possessions, more aristocratic than the titled progeny of successful generals, or lawyers. It is too by the enormous vitality in our country of the principle of inequality, so that an infinity of grades and distinctions is established, and each, however far down in the scale, looks upon itself as aristocratic in comparison with those below it ; it is in the constant upward tendency of the age in English civilisation, the rising not merely of individuals, but of whole classes in public estimation, and yet not in such a manner as to dethrone or derogate from the preeminence of the higher, but by sending up wealthy families who will strengthen the class which they enter, and cling to their preeminence and privilege with the proverbial tenacity of parvenus ; it is in the constant draining from what is properly the democratical class in our nation of the wealthiest and the most powerful into the higher ranks that lies one of the secrets of the indefinite prolongation of the acme of England.

A curious practical result seems to follow from these considerations. Wise statesmen, calmly reviewing the history of other countries, have inveighed strongly against the growth of a plutocracy, both because it is destructive of the constitutional régime, and because it substitutes a state of society and a consequent form of government to which the opinion of most political philosophers is

adverse. Statesmen of our country have also long been inveighing against the rise and power of the moneyed interest, but not with equal wisdom; for with us it has not been an hereditary body, adverse to the aristocracy, but is in fact a nursery for the growth of new aristocratic families, and provides a constant importation of fresh independence and energy into the highest classes of the state, and prevents them from becoming a close and jealous oligarchy.

Sometimes indeed the plutocracy of England has by its ambition and energy disordered the constitution. Rich Indian proprietors and retired tradesmen at one time bought up the small boroughs in order that in Parliament they might advance a commercial interest or gratify a new ambition. The Reform Bill checked this to a considerable extent; though now that class finds its way in too large numbers into the House of Commons, no longer perhaps by purchasing a seat, but by truckling to the lower passions of the least respectable electors.

Fortunately there is a remedial grace in the local affections of the more honest constituencies, who prefer a plain man of character and station, well known to them and theirs, to a distant adventurer of plausible speech or facile purse. And in England less than in any other country has the plutocracy any need of seizing power to itself, for our aristocracy is divided, partly by hereditary tradition, partly by the difference of their individual natures, into two parties, one lofty and haughty, though fired with an intense desire to perform well their public duties, the other more popular in their manners, their principles, and their tempers, and ever ready to put themselves at the head of reforming movements. In the great Whig houses, the life-plutocrats of our country have ever recognised their natural and hereditary leaders. So that the frame of English society has solved the problem that has baffled constitutional statesmen else-

where*, the problem of making progress conservative. If in countries where the nobility is exclusive, and daily becoming poorer, progress is allowed, the consequence is to raise up by trade and the other means of enriching the town population powers cordially hostile to the institutions of the country. In England progress has been allowed to go its own way to work, neither systematically repressed, nor always favoured by the ruling powers. Its course at the present day has two visible effects.

First, as hinted above, it tends to the reinforcement and support of those classes, who from interest as well as feeling would maintain as unchanged as possible the leading features of the governmental and administrative system, in other words it recruits the aristocracy.

Secondly, it is now creating another change — silent but great. This is the growth of a permanent town plutocracy and of a town democracy. Hitherto the town plutocracy has consisted of persons in a state of transition from the order of merchants and shopkeepers to the order of country gentlemen. So long as the position of a country gentleman remains an object of ambition, the plutocratic life will remain but a stage of transition for those who are successful enough to be able to pass through it, but in the immense number of candidates for the order of country gentlemen, it is impossible that all, burdened as they often are with large families, should be able to pass on, and no small portion of them will therefore permanently remain as a town plutocracy. If free themselves of business they can, like the present germ of their order, go to live among the plutocracies of the continent; but if they retain their capital and their personal interest in commerce, they must live according to their means, too rich to be plain shopkeepers, too poor to be manorial gentlemen. Born in the

* See the attempt of Drusus to reinforce the aristocracy of Rome. Niebuhr, H. R. iv. 380.

town, without the taste for country amusements, their children might, if, by their own increased wealth, they had the option, prefer the gaiety and splendour and bustle of the city to a rural quietude, which they would think dull, and exercises which would seem to them coarse and fatiguing. The tastes and habits of this class, formed of those children, and even of the children of those who ultimately became country gentlemen, but were not able to do so till their families were brought up, are exercising a most important influence in changing English customs, manners, and even literature.

Thus we have, by the increase of professions commerce and manufactures, an increasing class of town plutocrats. Every one may easily arrive by himself at a just appreciation of its effect upon the general community by performing two processes. First, by observing the character of absolute plutocracies; secondly, by observing how that character is modified when it comes into collision and conflict with other social elements.

Towards the first process some assistance may be afforded by the description of the character of plutocracy in countries where it has been absolute, or at most tempered only by an admixture of democracy. Other chapters of this book are devoted to the elucidation of that kind of plutocracy. But in applying those descriptions to the character of a social element not absolute, but merely one of the elements of a constitutional country, it must be remembered that plutocracy, in its latter capacity, becomes stripped of many of those objectionable qualities which it possesses when absolute. Every form of government (except constitutional monarchy, which is in its very existence a negative of absolutism) has its greatest faults developed when absolute.* The first government of a

* See Sismondi, *Études sur les Constitutions des Peuples Libres*, Introduction p. 34.

nation shows us an aristocracy in its worst and most oppressive form. Why? Because it is absolute. Democracy is useful as a counter element to contest aristocracy or monarchy, but becomes corrupt when absolute. We Englishmen have our opinions of absolute monarchies, and so I would say of absolute plutocracies as contrasted with the plutocratic element in constitutional countries, the former is comparatively corrupt, and corrupt just because it is absolute. Do not, therefore, in reading of the good and evil of plutocracy, as manifested in other countries, conclude that the growth of plutocracy in England will entail upon us any large portion of that evil. As aristocracy has been tempered and mitigated in England in the days when it was the most powerful element, so will plutocracy, when it comes to be the chief power in this country, be nevertheless kept under an equally salutary check. It will not be allowed sufficient power, either for good or for evil, to transfuse its own peculiar character unalloyed into the general character of the nation.

Now, the growth of a new element in a state requires a certain change in the administrative and governmental system. Their place must be given to the new plutocrats of the towns. We find, therefore, that the members of this class who, from inclination or for want of sufficient wealth, do not become country gentlemen are very warm supporters of liberalism, which as opposed to conservatism indicates perhaps little else than a more favourable disposition towards adapting the constitution to the altered state of the nation, towards giving less prominence to the country gentry, who are for this purpose identified with the aristocracy, and more prominence to the town population. In the old times of little adventure, the refined progeny of men who had achieved great things, whether in the field, or at the bar, or in the senate, or in commerce, had some hereditary right to look down upon those who neither had performed themselves, nor had inherited the fame of great

achievements ; but in an age of considerable adventure, when a very large class of the community is struggling for distinction and wealth, it is not so easy for the descendants of a similar class of the past generation to look down upon them. It is too much like sons despising their fathers ; for the aristocracy of this country is becoming daily more and more exclusively composed of the sons of the plutocracy. And this paternal character, together with their sound business heads, gives to the latter class a weight and importance in the national councils which cannot but have a very striking influence in changing the aspect of English society, and as a consequence, the English constitution. Each of the great parties — the conservative and the liberal — will have its advocates among statesmen ; but in office the action of wise statesmen will be very similar, whatever may be the party to which out of office they belong.

The national progress is the resultant of the two contending powers, Conservatism and Liberalism. He will, I apprehend, be the best statesman who knows best how to temper and conciliate the two, and make the governmental system reflect the social elements in the state. It is well that there should be strong advocates to fight the battle of each ; but the minister should not try to guide the country according to the views of either force, but in the direction of the resultant of the two. To discover that resultant will exercise his penetration ; to support it against the opposing clamours of either party, his firmness and skill. It is curious to observe how, without any great desire to act in the direction of this resultant, the ministers are attracted towards it by a stern necessity. If they were violent Liberals out of office, in office they acquire a strong Conservative tinge. If they were obstinate Conservatives in opposition, as soon as they come on the Treasury Bench they begin moderately to reform. It is of the highest importance that the persons who pre-

vent the minister from leaning too much to that course of action which he advocates when out of office, should be themselves persons who can receive no favours from him, and who are themselves fit to take his place. If there are none such, the minister (as in the case of Sir Robert Walpole) becomes practically a despot ; for the small fry of underlings and hack writers who may assault him are easily bought off by a place. Hence the necessity, in a constitutional country, of two independent parties, no matter what their speculative principles or theories, in order that the one out of office may be a proper and efficient check upon the one in office.

At this point we must take our leave of England. The rest of the path which we are to describe is yet untraversed by our nation. Yet an Englishman writing of politics may perhaps hope for pardon when he sometimes illustrates his remarks, if by no other, by way of contrast from the history of his own country. For we who thus aspire to take a general and unbiassed survey of all countries and of all nations, are yet as unable to divest ourselves of our own private affections and sympathies as Dante, who, when he visited in his imagination the realms where the whole of mankind receive their last rewards or their last punishments, was pleased to single out along with the great and illustrious condemned his former rivals in the petty squabbles of his own town.

Nor in a practical point of view is the contemplation of the later stages of national life useless to an English statesman, for in them and their prevailing characteristics, on whose absence we fondly dote, he will find the reasons of the deep-rooted and mutual aversion between monarchical absolutists and democrats on the one hand; and constitutionalists on the other. The heart of England is true to constitutional monarchy, and with an instinct which often leads right when theorists go wrong, it hates absolute democracy and absolute monarchy as things

near akin, and deserving a common hatred. That it does so not without solid reason, and that in classing them together it hits a great truth, I hope to make apparent in the following chapters, which are devoted to the illustration of governments, each of which is formed out of one simple social element, or at most out of the union of two.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE SECOND STAGE OF THE NATIONAL ACME.

CO-EXISTENCE OF PLUTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY.

Τὸ μὴ μίαν ἀλλὰ δύο ἀνάγκη εἶναι τὴν τοιαύτην πόλιν, τὴν μὲν πενήτων, τὴν δὲ πλουσίων, οἰκοῦντας ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ, ἀεὶ ἐπιβουλεύοντας ἀλλήλοις.* — PLATO, *Rep.*, p. 551.

"In Boston those purse-proud people are said to hold together more than anywhere else; they scarcely associate with any but their own class, marry amongst themselves, and even live almost together in one street, viz. Beacon Street." — IDA PFEIFFER'S *Second Voyage*.

"Look at this street; this it is that divides New York into two classes. Those who have not made their fortunes live to the East of Bowery-street, those who have made their fortunes live to the West." — AMPÈRE, *Promenade en Amérique*.

THE rise of a plutocracy is a never-failing characteristic of the national acme, and sooner or later this of necessity becomes a separate and independent order of the state, and exercises a most powerful influence in changing the national character.

The state of society which may be called the second stage of the national acme is not entered upon till the plutocracy has obtained its position as an independent

* The (fault) is this, that such a city must necessarily become two cities, the one composed of the poor, the other of the rich, dwelling together in constant conspiracy against one another.

and powerful order. No state of society varies so much in particular instances, for as many as five social forces may be present with various degrees of power and influence, and the whole which is formed by the confluence and conflicts of these constituent parts can never be the same in two instances, unless the constituent parts are all of precisely the same degree of power and influence in each instance, a coincidence which necessarily will almost never occur.

It is impossible to present at once a neat, finished, and comprehensive sketch of this stage of national progress. The reader must kindly bear with me, while, like the fabricator of a detailed frieze, I put on, perhaps in capricious order, now one figure, now another, staying sometimes to note how the whole would look if the work stopped there.

So long as any other secular element remains in the state, the democratic and the plutocratic elements grow up in fraternal concord together, the former the elder and the more turbulent; the latter a younger, a quieter, but a stronger brother. They both, in fully developed states, and where the plutocracy remains a separate order and does not gradually merge into the aristocracy, are exclusively of the subject race, and bear a grudge against the military noblesse, both advocate strict social equality, and each is jealous of the power of an old hereditary monarchy.

But when the aristocracy has died away or become a plutocracy, when the monarchy which rose from it, and for some time struggled to overpower it, is also gone, this second stage of the national acme is before us. And then comes an entirely new phase of social arrangements.

Throughout the long course of the ideal development which we have been constructing, by putting together examples, each in some measure imperfect, but contributing its quota to the knowledge of the ideal, one social element, beginning in the very depths, has ever kept welling

up. The contentions of those above it have but opened fissures through which it may rise. It came level with the surface, and then we remarked how the general aspect of the scene was altered by the equal level of all the social elements: that was the constitutional period; but things do not stop there, and the flood that has risen so high as to be on the surface, in the end rises higher and submerges it. Such is the upward tendency of the democratic element.

Scarcely ever is a country found in which the democratic element exists alone. For in general, while it is advancing to power, the plutocracy is advancing likewise, and when the old régime of monarchy and aristocracy is ready to be shaken off, the new system is not composed of democracy or plutocracy alone, but of the two combined.

When, however, a section of the democratic element emigrates to a new land, and before a plutocracy has grown up shakes off the sway of the mother country, then is presented the rare specimen of a nation in which the democratic element is established, with scarcely anything to control it.

In the United States of America, our age enjoys the advantage denied to the political philosophers of other ages, of studying the example of a nation which consists of a portion of the democratic element detached from another country, and planted alone in a new land where it reigns with no alloying element. There one may trace the workings of unchecked democracy; and tracing them rightly, we should never forget the cardinal axiom, that *the same social force possesses a very different character when subject to other forces, when of equal power with them, and when itself absolute*, in the same way that a similar change of circumstances would call out very different sides in the character of mankind. The difference between the democratic element in constitutional monarchy and democracy when absolute, is the difference between a character only half developed and checked by counter-

acting influences, and one which is allowed full scope; and so again, when democracy and plutocracy co-exist, they are modified and controlled by each other.

Wherever the democratic element exists it is accompanied by certain definite characteristics, and without understanding these it were impossible to understand democracy.

One of these is equality of conditions. This may be observed under three states of circumstances. First, when struggling against the inequalities of an aristocracy. Second, when absolute, and without control. Third, when controlled only by plutocracy.

Throughout the anterior stages the gradual successes of the democratic vein are always marked by the proportionate decay of the ancient systems of inequality. The very principle of democracy in the contests with aristocracy is the equality of social conditions, and in many countries the struggles between the aristocracy and the democracy have in words at least turned wholly upon this. The triumph of the democracy is shown among other things by the removal of ranks, titles, dignities, privileges independent of office, and all the attendant complications in law, and anomalies in the machinery of government. The basis of their systems is the reduction of all persons who claim to be higher or greater than the regulation unit, and when the population has been thus made to consist of equal units, a few are temporarily elevated by office to perform the exigencies of the public service, but when their term of office expires they must sink again to the regulation level.

Among the effects of uncontrolled social equality, not the least striking is the absence of great men. Genius is a form of eccentricity, and in a state where social equality is carried to an extreme point, originality, and every deviation from the mode and tone of thought of the masses, is a crime. Democratic societies have often been observed to be most addicted to indulge in envy, for with them emi-

nence of any kind is a sin against the social order, and each feeling himself no higher than the dreary level, forbids his neighbour to rise above it. Such nations, therefore, abolish the genus of which the great man is the species. Eminence is the prize of greatness; it was for eminence, for fame, for glory, that the men of genius in this world have laboured. When a society says there shall be no eminence among us, it has said also there shall be no genius.

The accumulation of wealth by individuals and by families is the only substantial antidote to the social equality of a democratic society. The democratic statesmen of antiquity invented that strange device of Ostracism for getting rid of any person who, either by wealth, by popularity, or by the respect due to a character more than ordinarily noble, had raised himself to a position higher than the regulation level. Aristides was held dangerous to the state, and banished, because men grew tired of hearing him called *The Just*. The real crime of Socrates was eminence, and for this he died, while the popularity of Alcibiades wounded the self-love and aroused the fears of the equal citizens, who drove him from their city. Modern democratic societies have, with a similar view, adopted the plan of limiting the power of testamentary disposition, as in seven principal Swiss cantons it was provided that all children, both male and female, should inherit in equal portions, leaving to the father a power of disposing only of one-third of his estate to such son as he most favoured*; and in America a similar check is placed on the aggregation of family fortunes. It is unfortunate for the scientific beauty of their legislation that they cannot prohibit by law the birth of men of genius; but the social condition of the country practically remedies the omission, by preventing the men who have genius from showing it.

* Switzerland in 1714, p. 102.

In America the plutocracy has not yet attained sufficient power seriously to modify the democratic régime, but in Venice, where such checks do not seem to have been imposed, a plutocracy arose. The constitution of Venice was for two centuries and a half a pure democracy.* None were elevated above the level of social equality except the twelve magistrates, who were chosen annually, and who governed the republic with the concurrence of a popular assembly and the assistance of a council of forty persons, both chosen by the people. When, however, wealth and population increased, the magisterial offices became gradually confined to the wealthy families who, from filling these offices through many successive generations, acquired a kind of hereditary grandeur and influence detrimental to the principle of social equality.

Other plutocracies, which were not formed suddenly by the transference of an aristocracy into a plutocracy, arose in a similar manner. Now plutocracies in theory do not militate against the principle of social equality. The plutocrats do not constitute a distinct body nor enjoy exclusive rights or privileges. In America the incipient plutocracy, in all the luxury and refinement of their mansions in the Fifth Avenue, so different in views, and tastes, and habits, from the mass of the people, always support with ostentatious adherence the principle of social equality, and repudiate all idea of belonging to a separate order of the state or being anything else but plain American citizens. So the Venetian plutocracy, for many centuries after it was established, claimed no exclusive privileges. Each noble out of his place in the senate had no pre-eminence above the plainest citizen.

This peculiarity belongs to all plutocracies, and distinguishes them vitally from aristocracies. The result of it is, that in societies where democracy and plutocracy are the sole co-existing elements, the principle of social

* See an able article in *Ed. Rev.* vol. 46, p. 81.

equality receives no theoretical, though it does receive a practical, counteraction.

It is absurd to suppose that there can be substantially no difference between the status of a family in the receipt of £80,000 a-year and a family of artisans receiving thirty shillings a-week. The habits, the tastes, the modes of passing time must necessarily be so different, that being transmitted from generation to generation, the rich and the poor form two distinct classes. Theoretically all are equal, but practically in a plutocracy the harshest line of social division is drawn. It is true that that line may be crossed by those who, beginning with a life of poverty, acquire riches, but from that very reason that the line is capable of being crossed, the territory within it is more jealously and scrupulously guarded.

It sounds trite to say that an assailable position is sure to have a stronger and more vigilant garrison than one that is unassailable; but if we trace that principle through the intricacies of human action, it will help to clear away many apparent inconsistencies. The serjeant is more proud of his position as one of her Majesty's officers, more strict in discipline, more of a martinet, more pertinacious in drawing the line between officer and private, than the most conceited fop who holds an ensign's commission. The latter has never been in the ranks, never fears to be confounded with them, and does not care about insisting upon the line between officer and soldier. The officer who has been a private loses no opportunity of drawing that line, by showing the amazing difference between those who give orders and those who take them.

And so, when the two classes in a state are a plutocracy and a democracy, in other words the rich and the poor, with no other distinctions between them except what follow from the mere possession of wealth, — wealth which it is not impossible for some of the poor to obtain, and thereby enter the higher orders, — the rich maintain an artificial distance from the poor which makes the rela-

tion of a plutocracy to a democracy entirely different from the relation of an aristocracy to a democracy.

The aristocrat mingles freely with those below him, the idea of equality between him and them never enters the head of either; their communications proceed upon the basis of respect on the one side, protection and patronage on the other. The feudal aristocrat glories in the number and valour of his retainers and pursuivants, and in his warlike and rude tastes the uneducated rustic can well participate. If there is war they follow in his train, proud of the chivalry and grandeur of their chief, and he of their loyalty and daring. If there is peace, his days are divided between the chase, in the delight of which the whole country joins, and the rude revelry of his bare brick hall, the dais for the lord and his party, who would enjoy their banquet less were not the rest of the hall filled with a jovial feasting train.

As refinement comes the classes become more separate; the nobleman would be thought an ill host who asked a diner-out from the Champs Elysées or Rotten Row to feast under the same roof with the farmers and labourers on his estate; but still the hunt, and the race, and all the rustic sports in which an aristocracy delights, are a firm bond of sympathy between them and the country people; and the Lady Bountiful of the mansion, who knows the Christian name of all the cottager's children, and helps to put them to school, and apprentice them in life, forms no slight link between the high and the low.

But contrast the baron's open banquet room with the cold forbidding portal of a Venetian palace. Your gondola stops at the marble steps, carved with the cunning of consummate sculptors, a magnificent hall arrayed with the choicest statuary of antiquity, hung with the *chef-d'œuvre* of Titian and Giorgione, paved with mosaic from the choicest quarries, ushers you through three gorgeous anterooms into a spacious and glittering saloon,—the richness of the carving, the dazzling burnish of the gold,

the sumptuousness of the velvet, the magnificence of the painted ceiling, the costly cabinets of unique antiquities—what are they all there for? to tell you that the owner is a member of the plutocracy, nor fear within his walls to be polluted by the presence of a pauper.

The exclusiveness of a plutocracy is far greater than that of an aristocracy, and not without a natural motive. An aristocrat may associate with whom he pleases, and none but aristocrats claim an equality with him. However familiar he may allow his inferiors to be to him, they never boast to be his equals, but a plutocrat being divided from the poorer only by his wealth, is always jealous of associating with them, lest he should be mistaken for one of them. He has no undoubted personal rank, no glory of ancestry, no heritage of position upon which to fall back, and unless he make a pomp and show of wealth and associate only with the wealthy, what is the use of his wealth? Some persons may ask what is the use even then, and no doubt will be able to supply a satisfactory answer.

The philosopher in his garret can of course come to only one conclusion about the exclusiveness of a plutocracy. He says with Walter Savage Landor*, "I see no aristocracy in the children of sharpers from behind the counter, nor, placing the matter in the most favourable point of view, in the descendants of free citizens, who accepted from any vile enslaver, French, German, or priest, or monk, the titles of counts and marquises." It is ridiculous and disgraceful, proceeds the philosopher, to choose your companions because of their balance at their bankers, when you know you began business yourself, or your father did before you, with no balance at all; but till nature is differently constituted, a family of persons at ease, with horses and carriages, silks and satins, and the routine education of ladies and gentlemen,

* Works, i. 187.

will not covet social intercourse with a retail cheesemonger ; and as in a state of society where social equality is established beyond dispute, the cheesemonger if admitted to their intercourse would take every opportunity of showing that he thought himself as great as they are, and that mere riches are worth nothing, they may perhaps be pardoned for dispensing with his company.

With those still further below them in the scale of wealth, the labouring classes, it has yet seemed impossible for a plutocracy to establish any active sympathetic intercourse. With admirable liberality they fill subscription lists for public charities, they endow churches in poor districts, and not a few of them devote their personal labour and attention to delivering lectures, teaching in schools, and planning sanitary reforms. But the classes cannot mingle ; a plutocracy, for reasons elsewhere developed, always abides in towns. Their suburban villas and fashionable watering-places they visit occasionally, but in the town they have their head-quarters. A rich family in a town-palace, placed in a street of similar town-palaces, cannot have the same intercourse with the labouring classes of the town that a country family living in a lonely manor-house naturally has with the peasantry on and around the family estates. The result is that the town becomes divided into two broad classes, the rich and the poor, living in different districts, and having no communication with each other but when the plutocrat wants his palace re-decorated, or a new carriage built him ; nor even then does he exchange ideas with the working man, for his orders all go through a middleman, who alone communicates with the poor artisan, and communicates only in the harsh and grinding method of business.

Energy is another principal characteristic of the democratic element. The energy of a subject race is called forth primarily by the absolute necessity for men obtaining by sweat and labour the means of their subsistence,

and in some cases also by a desire to obtain not merely the means of subsistence, but also the comforts and even luxuries of life, and a share in political action. Although it is true that self-regard is at the root of this, how much nobler is it to make such efforts, with whatever motive, than to live, like the Irish peasantry of the last age, in those sluggish depths of poverty and crime into which a population increasing too rapidly for the supply of food must, unless it increases the means of subsistence, necessarily descend.

Now the direction which this enterprise, this democratic enterprise, takes, is greatly influenced in each instance by the prize which then happens to be held forth as the reward of labour. It is this which gives the key to the order of the professions. Let us pass them shortly in review, and so arrive at the elucidation of one cardinal characteristic of the stage of social progress which is at present under consideration.

“I am the son of a poor peasant, bred on the domain of a feudal warrior, my father his ascript. Our too-crowded hut denies me lodging, my soul is fired with a desire to free myself from this lowly bondage,—how can I accomplish it?

“I am fond of study; I will go to a convent or a university as a poor scholar. Some day perhaps as an abbot I shall take precedence of my father’s lord. Or it may be I have no taste for a priestly life;—yonder in the dell lives a busy little commune. How hard they labour there, but how free they are! No feudal lord dares meddle with them, for they have a charter from the king and own him for their only master. I will go there and work hard, and live a freeman.”

These and the wars are the sole outlets of the ambition of the subject race. The nobles think of no pursuit *but* that of arms. Their retainers serve in their ranks, but there is no such thing as a military profession.

The age of mere force passes away. The rights of pro-

perty are respected, the relations between men become complicated. Then arise lawsuits. The patron advocates his client's interests, instead of merely protecting him by arms; or the ecclesiastic, versed in subtle reasonings about things divine, becomes a subtle advocate about things human. In the feudal states of modern Europe the ecclesiastics were the first lawyers.

Presently law becomes a separate profession. The monarch gladly raises up a body of educated men free from the thralldom of the hierarchy, which is not seldom antagonistic to the monarch; out of the body of lawyers come great statesmen, who rank with, and sometimes above the nobles. This is a new object of democratic energy.

The professions contribute to the national acme no small part of its glory. There is generally some one profession which is a favourite with the cadets of the aristocracy. In England it is the army or the bar, in France the army, in Rome the church*; but the aristocratic profession is always to some extent, and the other professions are exclusively, followed by persons of humble origin, who seek, by success in their profession, to attain a personal distinction. I have illustrated this largely with regard to literature, and the rule applies to other professions, though eminence is not so exclusively their reward. The lawyer, the surgeon, the architect, and the artist have hopes of wealth as well as distinction, but they

* "The profession of the law is considered by the higher classes to be a base pursuit; no man of family would degrade himself by engaging in it. A younger son of the poorest noble would famish rather than earn his livelihood in an employment considered vile. The advocate is seldom, if ever, admitted into high society in Rome; nor can the princes or nobles comprehend the position of a barrister in England. . . . Priests, bishops, and cardinals, the poor nobles or their impoverished descendants willingly become—advocates or judges never. The solution of this apparent inconsistency is to be found in the fact, that in most despotic countries the profession of the law is contemptible."—*White-side's Italy*, i. 258, sq.

never during the acme cease the struggle for eminence, as distinguished from mere wealth. In this, and this alone, they differ from ordinary tradesmen; and until the national acme has far advanced, trade, which is generally the mere pursuit of wealth, never entirely emerges from the ban under which it labours in the earlier phases of national progress.

But when the aristocratic element is outrooted, when social equality is established, not merely does personal eminence cease to be a sufficient object of ambition, but it actually becomes a danger to be avoided. Be rich if you please, and those who envy you will console themselves for their poverty by thinking that any man can be rich if he tries, and that you owe your wealth at best to mere plodding, and perhaps, if examined, to dark transactions and dishonest courses. But hold not your head aloft as entitled to unusual personal respect and distinction because you have mastered a great and difficult science, brought to perfection a noble and intellectual art, or achieved some high emprise that genius can alone accomplish. If not ostracised, if not condemned to drink the poisonous draught, or guillotined, you will be the butt for ribaldry, ridiculed for your poverty, not honoured for your eminence; the best fate that awaits you is utter neglect. But if you pursue some course of becoming wealthy, you will then embark in the enterprise to which the whole nation devotes itself; in the race you will be urged by emulation; the prize, if you win it, will be sweeter because of the rivals you have distanced.

But it is all "business." You may be a lawyer, a physician, an artist, an architect, a tutor; they are all merely kinds of business. There is no more honour to you for following one of these professions than if you were a tradesman, or a contractor, or a land agent. They are merely means, if you thereby become rich, of leaving the democracy and entering the plutocracy.

It is the misfortune of the state of society which is

formed of these two elements, that there is nothing to counteract this absorption of every kind of occupation into the simple pursuit of wealth. The result is, that professional eminence is no longer sought for, except so far as a reputation for doing the work well is necessary to the obtaining orders to do it at all. Even that piece of policy is often lost sight of in the hurry of becoming rich, and the perfection of detail is sacrificed to the rapidity of execution. Thus the energy of the democratic element, which always is principally devoted to trade and commerce as the means of acquiring wealth and power, but which, under the control of other social elements, branches out into the pursuits of the intellectual and laborious professions, and thus contributes principally to the glory of the national acme; is, when democracy is absolute or controlled only by plutocracy, devoted to the sole pursuit of wealth.

————— “rem,
Si possis, recte; si non, quocunque modo rem.”

The combined results of social equality, and this restless energy and desire for wealth, are very striking; not merely feudal, but all the natural ties which bind men together in society, seem utterly removed. The process is this: Invention is the soul of commercial and manufacturing success: Novelty is the soul of invention. The love of novelty is, in other words, a love of perpetual change; the old is hated for its own sake, the new is loved merely because it is new. In democratic societies they, as it were, crop their ground with novelty, a seed which, though it produces often barren and hideous plants, in the shape of insane suggestions and lunatic schemes, produces also rational and profitable inventions. From that crop grew steam navigation, and a thousand minute mechanical inventions for abridging the time and labour occupied in material production. From that crop grows also that irritable restlessness which makes whole families

move their quarters, from no dislike of their old ones, except that they have been in them for some years.

Let us compare for a moment the movements of a rude aristocratic age with those of a civic democracy. The turbulent broils between members of a rude aristocracy and the bands of their clansmen fighting the chieftain's quarrel, are, in general, but the natural mode of providing exercise for whatever muscular power there is in a state beyond what is required for the provision of food, by hunting or agriculture. Although, therefore, such periods as those of Theseus, of Romulus, and the middle ages are, in one sense, ages of great unrest, the movements that then take place are the movements of large warlike hordes, migrating for better lands, and waging the constant feuds in which the charm of their life consists. When the states and nations have at last settled their boundaries, a dignified repose is the characteristic of the aristocratic element; while energy and enterprise, not so much of body as of mind, mark the democratic. This increases continually, and at last becomes that restlessness and irritable inconstancy, which is the universal accompaniment of accomplished democracy; a nervous individual impatience of rest, not one leading to great and steady undertakings, but a constant passion for movement and change for their own sakes. The hardships and exposure of warrior life, or of agricultural life, blunt the nervous system, while they develop the muscular. On the contrary, in civic life, the muscles are of scant and partial development. In a shopman, none are brought into much play; in a factory artisan, none but those of the arm; and in the history of our own country, as well as of others, this effect of town life is very striking. Sydenham, at the close of the seventeenth century, computed febrile diseases to constitute two-thirds of the maladies of mankind (judging, of course, from his own country); and Dr. Cheyne, who wrote in 1733, seldom met with nervous disorders among the bulk of the population, but observed them

more particularly among the higher classes of society. Now, as civic life, refinement, and the habits of indoor business have spread so vastly through the population, comes a consequent alteration in the proportion of muscular and nervous action. Nervous diseases, says Dr. Maddock*, have usurped the place of fevers and disorders of a more active type, and constitute by far the larger proportion of the cases which fall under the treatment of physicians. For while, before, the active exercise which men took produced the disease incident to a largely-developed muscular and sanguiferous system; now, on the contrary, the nerves are strained in the counting-house and the shop, by a perpetual anxiety of the future, by shrewdness to devise, quickness to perceive, eagerness to succeed.

The energy of a civic democracy is the energy to start enterprises, to institute new combinations, to organise plans, and calculate; to train to the highest pitch of manual dexterity, not the rough personal energy of the soldier, or the steady enduring energy of the ploughman; though it sometimes, as in great engineering works and bold maritime enterprises, gains credit for this natural activity, by using the brawny muscular frames drawn from field labour or the fisheries. Now, in the course of national progress, the muscular energy decreases, the nervous energy increases, and by the time when this stage of mixed democracy and plutocracy has arrived, the nervous restlessness of the nation is at its highest pitch. It was in such a stage that the *δῆμος* of the Pnyx, unwilling to betake themselves to any manly work, and fight for liberty against the Macedonian, as their ancestors had fought against the Persian, kept ceaselessly tormenting each other with the eager inquiry, *τί καινόν*; and listening to rhetoricians and comedians, legislating, voting, and taking bribes. It was in such a stage that the inconstant

* On Mental and Nervous Disorders, p. 18.

Parisians* deposed and erected governments from love of novelty and experiment. It is in such a stage that the Florentines, as Machiavel says, formerly embraced every new form of government because it was new. It is in such a stage that a nation of modern times sees large multitudes of its citizens sacrifice common sense, and the ordinary decencies of life, and every principle of rational devotion, to the mere excitement of novelty : they live in splendour, without comfort ; make every pleasure a business ; dine without digesting ; see without reflecting ; talk without regarding the feelings of those they address ; live a nomad life, passing from hotel to hotel replete with luxuries, with that " resistless energy " which every European may have observed who has met upon the Continent those sallow, stunted, emaciated frames, which find the ordinary pace of living too slow for them, and early retire to a mad-house, the prey of their unnatural excitement.

We meet with few great achievements in such an age ; for hurry and bustle spread into every form of life ; the author scrambles up his works in a flurry, has it printed by steam, read upon railways, and flung to the dogs with unexampled celerity. The artist, by nature a nervous impetuous person, who is only controlled and kept to steady labour and self-correction by the fastidiousness of his patrons and his rival artists, now catches fresh infection from the age, and the paintings roll off his easel, garnish the newfangled saloon, pass to the bankrupt's assignees, and are sold at quarter-price in the auction room in less time than it would take an artist, in quieter days, to rub in his background. They know not in such times the sweet waters that flow from the fountains of

* Moral changes precede changes in government, and thus restlessness, the companion of democracy, is the characteristic of nations approaching democracy. Thus Voltaire (*Examen du Prince de Machiavel*, ch. iv.) or his co-author, Frederic of Prussia, remarks how the levity and restlessness of the French nation had rapidly increased during the administrations of Richelieu and Mazarin, till it had, in his own day, reached the astonishing pitch which he portrays.

indolence. Leisure is the life of study, and leisure in a highly democratic society is ridiculous — for it is the antithesis of idle restlessness and busy luxury. If a great man, like Demosthenes, or Alfieri, does arise, he has lit his lamp from the expiring flame on hearths that are then cold, and in every sentiment of his life he runs counter to the spirit of his age. His speeches and his writings are full of its censure; his acts are dictated by a lofty scorn for those among whom he lives. It is not in such periods that men are encouraged to produce books that last for all time. Instability is the twin brother of restlessness. Effects must be produced in the shortest possible time, and with the least expense. Once produced, they will soon grow tedious, and be passed by for something newer. Why then should they be solid and lasting by their nature? To this dislike of the solid and enduring there is some countenance afforded by the rapid progress of mechanical invention in such an age. The new applications of science to matter show the inutility of constructing machines or ships to last for many years, for before they are worn out a new invention has superseded the principle of their construction.* The old is hated for its own sake, and why then construct anything so as ever to become old? The restless ingenuity of a “smart” age loves its newest toy, if only because it is the newest.

So that if we contemplate from without a democratic society, it seems in a perpetual movement of action; not the combined movement of a large mass, but the independent movement of an infinite number of atoms, wriggling about, each without any reference to another. The greatest individual efforts are produced in an earlier stage of national existence, when the principle of aristocracy, which ever reposes except when, like the persons of a tragedy, it is stirred by some deep emotion — when that principle is blended with the democratic energy. But in a democratic society every one is in perpetual agitation; and though the

* Say, *Cour d'Econ. Politique*, i. 291.

individual achievements are comparatively poor, the enormous number of individual efforts make an aggregate which is often great and striking.

Those collective efforts of the nation consist both of the aggregate of individual efforts, and the efforts of associations. In aristocratic countries, and to a great extent in constitutional nations, where aristocracy and democracy are blended, the collective efforts of the nation consist solely of the aggregate of individual efforts; but in democratic societies, so weak is the individual that scarce anything is accomplished except by an association of individuals; and the constant and apparently necessary resort to association, in order to accomplish what, in the earlier phases of national progress, would be the work of an individual, is one of the great features of democratic societies. It is, like all others of those features, only a development of characteristics belonging to the democratic element in all ages. Partnerships and public companies are expedients to which the trading element in every community has resorted; and in proportion as that element becomes stronger and at last absolute, so these expedients are resorted to more constantly for the purposes of trade and commerce, and applied to all the affairs of life, civic, political, charitable, and religious.

Thus we see that many of the qualities in the democratic element which, being then duly balanced and counteracted by other powers, contribute to the glory of the acme, become greatly different when they have nothing to temper and control them. The addiction to physical science becomes materialism, the civic energy becomes unreasonable restlessness, the emulation for political station becomes mere office hunting, the spirit of adventure turns to mere gambling, and the love of discovery ends in being a passion for novelty.

The rage for change attacks the form of government as well as all other established things, and hence the upraising and overturning of systems; hence anarchy in

the sense of disorder, not that constitutional *ἀναρχία* where each power is equally balanced and excluded from *ἄρχη*, but a state of constant turmoil, in which each power grasps the *ἄρχη* in turn, and exiles or murders every other. A restless dislike of authority, and determination ever to vindicate the favourite principle of democracies, social equality leads, as a natural consequence, to the corruption of every government. Every man wishes to be equal to the magistrates, and the people wish to do all by itself; to deliberate, execute, and judge; for the creed of social equality reduces all men to a level, denies the right of any one to be of himself better than the rest, and gives sovereignty to the mass. For the purpose of government it is necessary to put into office certain units of this equal mass. If the democratic characteristics are carried to their extreme point, there is no respect for these nominees of the sovereign majority. They are exposed to the grossest personal abuse, charged continually with corruption, and dismissed at the earliest possible period with ignominy, if not impeachment and punishment. The consequence is, that men of character and sensibility are no candidates for office, and the places of public trust fall into the hands of unscrupulous persons. Unless this is in some manner checked, a despotism is the certain result; the only check that can be applied to it is derived from the plutocracy.

If an ambition is cherished among the citizens who have enriched themselves, to hold public office and to educate their sons for filling even the highest offices of the state, and if the democracy is sufficiently quiescent to permit the rich and their sons to fill some of the places of trust without lavishing upon them abuse and censure, except when they deserve it, the government of the state may be carried on with liberty, with much economy, and much fairness.

In this respect the plutocracy affords the only true antidote to the excessive social equality of a democracy.

By his very existence, the plutocrat gives somewhat of a check to the idea, that in all things all men are equal; equal in want of power, in that miserable feebleness which leads to the constant establishment of associations. The object of the plutocrat is to obtain wealth, station, and power. If he is successful he becomes a strong element of stability. He builds a sumptuous town-palace, furnishes it with magnificence, and hopes to leave it to those who bear his name and will cherish his memory. The sandheap associations into which the struggling democrats are constantly throwing themselves for a particular object, to be dispersed as soon as that object is accomplished, or has become old-fashioned, seek the advantage of the plutocrat's name upon their list of directors, and he is glad of the opportunity of displaying his wealth and heading a subscription list magnificently. For plutocrats are even less than other classes addicted to doing good by stealth, and blushing to find it fame. As he becomes richer, the plutocrat himself accomplishes alone the work that associations of individuals are formed to accomplish. He takes up the whole loan to a foreign prince; he endows an entire hospital; he builds without assistance a church and parsonage; his fellow citizens owe to him the establishment of a public library, to which no one else contributes. In all this he introduces a counteraction to the democratic associative habit, the result and the sign of universal weakness, but just as with regard to social equality, his counteraction is not one of principle. He does not oppose social equality theoretically, though he practically modifies it, and so there is no antagonism to association; but he can, and often does, dispense with it. And I can conceive nothing more salutary to a democratic society than the spectacle of men who, by their own individual action, can begin, carry on, and complete an important undertaking, even though nothing else is required for the undertaking but money and the disposition so to apply it.

Disgusted with their equals taking the emoluments and honours of office, the democrats cherish a hope that the rich men, who have property and character to lose, may perform the duties of public life with more patriotism and honour. And, indeed, either the rule of a plutocracy or the rule of a despot becomes necessary; for nothing is so insufferable as a corrupt democratic executive; and it seems that, in order to preserve this stage of national existence, it is necessary for the democracy, in matters of administration, to give the principal place to the plutocracy. The two elements, though conflicting in many respects, are not so contradictory in their nature that they cannot coexist for any length of time without social revolutions.

Indeed, this stage of national existence, if we may judge from some celebrated instances, possesses an inherent power of duration not less than is possessed by any other stage of national existence; for though no nation has actually remained as long in this stage as Norway has in the first stage or China in the last, yet the catastrophe which has terminated the co-existence of democracy and plutocracy has come from without; and by reason of the constant exposure of nations in this stage to external attacks by land, and their small ability to offer a successful resistance, none of them has had any respectable duration unless it could call the waters to its aid. The Venetian and the Carthaginian histories would deserve no slight fame if only for the long duration of the government of wealth. The Dutch, at a humble distance, may be added to the list of durable plutocracies. Of these, the first people lived in the sea, the second upon it, and the third under it. So that land troops could not reach Venice at all; if they came to burn the cities of the Phœnicians, the inhabitants went on board ship with all their treasures; if they marched into Holland, the dykes were opened to submerge them.

Why should plutocracy be so dependent upon Neptune for its safety? Is it from some particular defect inherent

in its nature? or is not this defencelessness, like plutocracy itself, an effect of the social change in which they both appear together? I believe the true solution lies between the two, and the few positions which will here be submitted to the reader, while they tend to illustrate the nature of those communities which are under the unchecked sway of the wealthiest, may likewise serve to trace some of the prominent features in the gradations from the age when aristocracy is supreme to that period of the national acme when plutocracy comes forward as a leading power. But ever remember that these phenomena are not isolated growths, but each bear their part in the chain of social development; and when we attempt to distinguish nobility from plutocracy, we have done but half of our task unless we show that one is naturally precedent to the other, and that in a full course of development there are many intervening links between them.

It may be laid down with small need of proof, and less fear of contradiction, that the acme is the age of large cities. The very growth of the commons into wealth and power necessitates large cities; by them, as fortified places, they become emancipated from the nobles; by them, as emporia of trade, they obtain their wealth; in them they live and die, and have the scene of all their hopes and disappointments, their joys and fears. Plutocracy is the parasite that grows up with democracy during the acme; living by it, thriving when it thrives, increasing as it increases, plutocracy finishes by mastering it. If we connect these two propositions, it is apparent that plutocracy and large cities rise up and increase side by side; and this gives a very useful and never failing clue for discovering a plutocracy, even when it is invested with all the insignia of aristocracy. For one is the power that precedes the age of cities; the other the power that grows with them. In proportion as a state is aristocratical, the great men live on their lands, and glory in fortified mansions, retainers, activity, and field sports; in proportion as it is

plutocratic, those who seek to be rich, and the dregs of nobility, flock into commercial towns, which are the places for making wealth, and live there after they have made it in sedentary and splendid sloth.

There are no exceptions to this rule which are not grounded on some fallacy. Rome may occur to persons forgetful of the fact* that the noxious air of the Campagna in summer was the reason why the country people were obliged to live for some part of the year on or about the seven hills. Many other ancient towns were originally inhabited as fortresses, and not as homes of trade. So that an accident of climate, or the neighbourhood of warlike tribes, are the causes of an apparent exception to the rule that large towns are inhabited not by agriculturists or a military noblesse, but traders and plutocrats. During the times of the king, and indeed far down into the struggles between patricians and plebeians, trade was carried on for the mere necessities of life, and Rome was filled by the patricians and their clients for one party, and wealthy plebeian farmers for the other; the other ancient towns were in their origin similarly peopled. On this fact I ground an earnest protest against the common classification of pre-Imperial Rome, and the Italian cities of the middle ages in the same category. Those cities, it is probable, originated† in the necessity of common pro-

* Niebuhr, *Hist. Rom.* i. 139.

† Gallenga says, "The Italian is no lover of the country; he dreads, of all things, an isolated dwelling. If he cannot live in the capital, then in a provincial city; if not in a country town, then in a village, only not in a country house; they huddle together in their squalid burghs and hamlets, and the happiest man is he whose forefathers have built their house in the warmest closet, court or alley, hard by the market-place. Every man owns a vineyard, and every vineyard has a hut; but that hut is no man's abode, or only the luckless hind's who digs and prunes it."—*Country Life in Piedmont*, p. 44. And in p. 88 he says, "For after all, this loathing of the Italian for rural seclusion and isolated dwellings . . . arose at first from the insecurity of a country invaded for so many centuries by hordes of barbarians in times of war, and infested by bands of even worse barbarous malefactors in days of peace."

tection against the hordes of barbarians which infested the peninsula in the middle ages, and thus, in their origin, resembled Rome; but their early life was passed through, in most instances, with extraordinary rapidity, and as to all, is now wholly neglected and uncared for. We read not of struggles between patricians, and a plebs of sturdy farmers, as we do with so stirring an interest in the early history of Rome; but the picture which the history of the Italian cities of the middle ages presents to us, is composed of societies where the only secular elements are a civic, commercial, and artistic democracy, and a plutocracy having no single attribute of an aristocracy. Florence was the only one among the great Italian cities of the middle ages which, during its acme, retained an aristocracy as distinct from a plutocracy, and in this lies the principal cause of the great difference between Florentine and Venetian civilisation.

If anything were needed to show the distinction between nations like the Romans, up to the time of the death of the elder Cato, and nations in the stage of co-existent democracy and plutocracy, two points of contrast, intimately connected with each other, might be selected for illustration; the same two points of contrast which, existing also between England and Venice in the sixteenth century, especially attracted the attention of those shrewd emissaries whom the senate of Venice sent to England in the days of Henry VIII. In the relations which they rendered to their plutocratic employers, they express themselves as being struck by the hardy character of our population, and their early training to arms; they are struck with what they call the negligence of the inhabitants in leaving large tracts of country in common and forest, and only cultivating as much as suffices for their subsistence, instead of growing rich by exporting corn. They are struck by the rural characters of the gentry, their dairies, their parks, and their forest lawns. Every one of these is a point of contrast, not merely between England in the six-

teenth century, and Venice in the sixteenth century ; but between every country under an aristocratic and one under a plutocratic régime.

Now, first with respect to agriculture. However various the fashions and modes of tenure, after which the first settlers in a land portion it out among themselves, there is but one leading object, the enabling the bulk of the population scattered over the soil to live by the fruits of its culture. The foundation of aristocracy, whether by conquest or by the imposition of inferiority on new comers, interferes with this arrangement only so far as to exact from the cultivators sufficient produce for the support of the superior class. Of the former, the Norwegian bonder ; of the second, the English landowners, up to the days of Elizabeth, are fair examples.

A change succeeds slowly or rapidly in proportion to the speed of the national progress. In England slowly, rapidly in mediæval Italy. The object, then, is to obtain more wealth by the land. This is, in fact, the application of commercial principles to agriculture, regarding it as a surface for the manufacture of money ; and as the acutest observer of social affairs since Montesquieu* has remarked, that which the landed proprietors gain in wealth they lose in influence.

It is a very just saying of Adam Smith, that the natural progress of a people in civilisation and improvement, is from the country to the town ; and that in modern Europe, manufactures and foreign commerce have given birth to the principal improvements in agriculture. He need not, however, have restricted the latter to modern Europe, for in ancient times, and especially in ancient Rome, the spirit of commerce had produced the same change. The love of agriculture for its own sake died out with the days when dictators and statesmen came from the plough and retired to it. The old plebeian peasantry were

* De Tocqueville, *Dém. en Amér.* iv. 51.

ousted into towns or consumed in wars, and small farms disappearing into large ones, the great plebeian families, and not a few of the patrician, too, became, by means of slaves, capitalist manufacturers of landed produce. In Roman history there is a steady increase in the production from landed capital, up to the days of Augustus and Tiberius, while there was as steady an increase in the disgust of the richer Roman population for country life and occupations. The "Georgics" were expressly but vainly directed to the object of recalling the Roman populace to their ancient days of merry frugal rural life, when each plebeian yeoman regarded his domain as an estate to live on happily, not as a manufactory to grow rich by.

The process is, however, still more marked in modern times, and the distinction between the mode in which land is used by an aristocracy and by a plutocracy affords a most important insight into the difference between the states of social life respectively presided over by those two forces.

The domains of an aristocracy are cultivated either by the peasantry living upon them, who pay no rent but render services to the lord ; or by farmers, who pay rent for the lands they occupy. So long as they are cultivated by the peasantry, scientific agriculture is unknown. The object of the peasant is to obtain sustenance, and when he can do that without excessive labour the population belongs to the type of simple cottagers, easily satisfied, very homely, honest, and unsophisticated, and equally ignorant and uninventive. It is a population admirable for a statesman to rule over, for it is quiet and happy ; admirable for the monarch who wants good material for his armies, for it furnishes him with robust and hardy youths, who find a rough campaign very little different from their ordinary life ; but not admirable for the political economist, who desires the wealth of the country to increase ; nor for the political philosopher, who thinks that every country ought to advance rapidly to its acme.

Tenant farmers are in fact the tradesmen of agriculture.

They have capitals embarked in the business, and high rent to pay for the land they occupy. Their business is to manufacture wheat, beef, and mutton, and, like the tradesmen of the towns, their object is to produce as much as possible with the least cost. They introduce altogether a different idea with respect to the occupation of land. It is not merely to be lived on, but it is the factory by which the capitalist is to grow rich. Often the capital made on the town is laid out on the farm, and yields a rich return; and when a number of active energetic traders apply their minds and their money to this business, they make in this as in other pursuits ingenious inventions, for lessening the cost and time of production.

Our English landed gentry have in this respect also combined the characters of seigneur and man of business. The great improvements in agriculture in this country have not been owing so much to the tradesmen-farmers as to the gentry who have farmed their own lands. They lay out their surplus income in fertilising barren wastes, in improving the national breeds of sheep and cattle, in testing agricultural experiments, and applying the thoughts of the chemical recluse to the broad acres where the ploughman plods. All this is magnificent, and the more so because the seigneur lives in the centre of the land he cultivates, and spreads his wealth among the people who assisted him to increase it, and who regard him not as their mere paymaster, but as their magistrate, chief, and friend. But this result is obtained only by the extraordinary fusion of all the social forces in English society; and as we have before seen the mode in which a pure aristocracy deals with its lands, so now let us see the method of a pure plutocracy.

A plutocracy resides in towns,—this is of its essence. It derives its wealth generally from the profits made in manufactures or in trade; but these profits when made are sometimes invested in land, which it then proceeds to treat not as a territory to be lived on, but as the raw

material for manufacturing corn, cotton, cattle, and other agricultural produce, which being sold in the best market shall return high interest for the capital employed. The plutocrat does not himself reside on the land ; he sends some bailiff or foreman to conduct the corn and meat factory for him.

This is the state of agriculture in Holstein, where the verpachter, or resident farmer, is generally the agent of a capitalist in Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen, who either owns the land or is mortgagee in possession.* This is the state of agriculture in our West India plantations; the proprietors, resident in England, put an agent into possession to work the sugar factory. This was the state of agriculture in the Venetian territories in the days when Venice was at its prime ; and the great palazzos, which adorn that city, had warehouses on the ground floor, where the produce of the plutocrats' estates on the continent was stored to be sold in retail in Venice, or, as it was thought more respectable, to be shipped to foreign markets in magnificent argosies.

“ Your mind is tossing on the ocean :
 There, where your argosies with portly sail,
 Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
 Or as it were the pageants of the sea,
 Do overpeer the petty traffickers
 That curt'sy to them, do them reverence
 As they fly by them with their woven wings.”

A pure commercial democracy deals with land after a fashion more like that of plutocracy than of aristocracy. It goes upon the land with little capital, but determined to make the most of it. The democrat always wants to be a plutocrat if he can, and to enjoy the sensual and material luxuries in which both democracies and plutocracies delight. The agriculture of a pure commercial democracy may be studied in America, where every commercial

* See Laing's Denmark, pp. 56, 56.

and democratic principle, good and evil, is carried into practice to an extent hitherto unparalleled, because there is no other social force to counteract the democracy. In some remote hamlets, where the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers yet live upon their paternal acres, the old moral feelings which they bore with them from England and Scotland remain; but in regions within the influence of the cities, agriculture in the United States is entirely of the new nature, so far as the ethics of the agriculturist are concerned.* The home of the capitalist-cultivator is in his city, whence, at various periods, he goes upon a piece of land as he would go upon a trading voyage. He taxes the productive powers of the farm to the utmost, and when they fail, sells it for building land or leaves it waste, and proceeds to a new patch, there to repeat the operation. He profits a little by each reinvestment, and retires at last to form a member of the plutocracy of his state, just as if he had been employed all his life among looms or in a counting-house. As for those who till the ground, they are operatives and citizens, and have their homes and their centres of ambition in their native towns. The Americans, says M. de Tocqueville†, have no use for the word peasant, because they have not the idea which it represents. They have neither the ignorance of early ages, the simplicity of life in the fields, nor the rusticity of the village; they have not preserved, and they cannot conceive the virtues, the vices, the grosser customs, or more naïve graces of the first epoch of national civilisation.‡ The citizens may retire into the country as far as

* I make this modification, because of the obvious practical distinction between countries where the extent of soil is limited and the great producer keeps to his old land and manures highly, and America, where the extent of surface is for present purposes unlimited, and where therefore the capitalist, instead of manuring his old fields, goes to new ones.

† Dém. en A. ii. 238.

‡ Those who desire to hear American testimony to these facts may read if they can Mr. Barnum's Autobiography. The description of his native

they please, but they cannot leave their passions behind them in the town.

Thus a society composed of coexistent democracy and plutocracy deals with land as a subject of trade. Both classes huddle into towns as much as they can, except when the democrat is himself proprietor of his small patch of land. He either lives upon this thriftily, like a small tradesman, or he mortgages it to some plutocrat, who soon ejects him and forecloses his mortgage. The latter process has been going on during the whole of this century in many parts of the continent, the peasant-proprietor being at last obliged to emigrate, while the Jew plutocrats of the towns seize his land, and have it cultivated by a resident agent, with all the improvements of advanced science, while they live in their splendour in the city.

Thus the effect of the growth of towns and the rise of democracy and plutocracy is to improve the science of agriculture, that is, to enable the cultivator to extract more produce from the land; but the old rural life and habits which prevail under an aristocratic régime are entirely lost.

Horace's "Rusticorum mascula militum proles" hits one of those general truths which we often find in poets and fail to find in historians, although the events that they record speak it. If agriculture and agriculturists change their nature, how is the profession supplied by agriculturists affected thereby? And this leads us to the second point of contrast between Venice and England in the days of the eighth Henry.

I would lay down, on this head, that *as the peaceful and civic arts increase, the military character has a ten-*

village, Bethel, near New York, conveys a vivid and striking picture, which cannot, I think, be other than deeply painful to any one who wishes the good of his kind. The gambling, the lotteries, the universal cheating, the systematic lying among the farming population of that part of America, exceed the most exaggerated accounts of Chinese or Hindu demoralisation.

dency to decline. The division of labour is at the root of both changes; and, indeed, if one resorts to the last analysis, in that principle may perhaps be found the explanation of every great social change in every nation.

At the first blush of settled life each father of a household is part soldier, part peasant, part manufacturer, part tradesman, and often part poet; none of these occupations employing exclusively a separate class of men. Thucydides tells us that in the early ages of Grecian life the peasants went armed to their work in the fields; and even in less embroiled countries every able-bodied man was liable to be called upon to defend his little homestead with the sword.

Then comes a change as chieftainship grows up and invasions succeed. The *αἰῆτοι* win their possessions by the sword, and give their vassals protection in exchange for receiving homage and subsistence. When the nation goes out to battle, the front rank, the mastery of strength, belongs to the *αἰῆτοι*. Some of the ancient peasant-race may still have to gird themselves for war; but they fight in the dark background,—a crowd of nameless heroes. Mr. Grote*, than whom thoughtful men acknowledge no historian combining more largely the minute knowledge of his special subject with the philosophy of history at large, has portrayed in vivid lines the military character of heroic Greece. There we see a loose array of valiant men, the chieftains foremost, in splendid panoply, each striving to excel his fellows in the number of the enemy he can slay; behind him an unorganised and ineffective mass of vassals. This is the ideal picture of a warrior-aristocracy, to whom the practice of war and its rewards, power, homage, beauty, self-respect, are the sole objects of existence. Like the roturiers of the French monarchy, the subjects were at first admitted into the army only in the capacity of valets. War is then most in honour;

* History of Greece, ii. 141, *sqq.*

and that species of war where individual distinction, rather than collective success, is the point of glory. The bard passes from the tent to the hall, from the market-place to the cottage, with tales of the prowess of the most valiant champions, and the lays of the banquet, like the statues of the Capitol, recalled the memory of illustrious ancestors in days when men could not separate, in word or in idea, virtue and valour.

The foremost men in such an age, men of the stamp of Achilles, Lancelot, Tancred, are magnificent heroes, brave and generous, but too often impracticable, strong in their friendships, stronger in their hatreds. They achieve admirable exploits when relying on their individual efforts and the efforts of those under their command, but the faculty of working in concert with other chieftains is not common among them.

After the rude age of mere chieftainship is passed, when the aristocracy is well settled in its territorial grandeur, the armies of retainers which the nobles keep about their persons go with them to the wars, and give to the national forces when arrayed in the field of battle a character and aspect peculiar to nations in that stage of society. "Neither," says Lord Bacon, "is the estate, (*i. e.* order of men) which for anything I know is almost peculiar to England, and hardly to be found anywhere else, except it be perhaps in Poland, to be passed over: I mean the state of free servants and attendants upon noblemen and gentlemen, which are no ways inferior unto the yeomanry for arms; and therefore, out of all question the splendour and magnificence and great retinues, the hospitality of noblemen and gentlemen received into custom do much conduce unto martial greatness, whereas contrariwise the close and reserved living of noblemen and gentlemen causeth a penury of military forces."*

There comes a change still more marked when science

* Bacon, Essay of the True Greatness of Kingdoms.

and study intrude upon the province where formerly valour reigned without a rival. The chiefs no longer place their boast in being the strongest, their part is rather to combine and lead in concert with each other inflexible ranks. This change took place, in Grecian warfare, between the time of Homer and the days which rendered Platæa and Cunæa famous.* A change has come over warfare in modern times, in principle the same; but practically still more conspicuous by the introduction of ordnance, and all the grim panoply which men of science have supplied to combatants.

Thus in military tactics, out of the old warrior comes by division of labour both officer and soldier.

But regarded in a social point of view, the division of labour works a yet more momentous change. The former alters the internal adjustment of the army, this concerns the relation of the army to the rest of the nation. In the first ages every man is upon occasion a soldier, then frequently the conquering race usurp all the chief military functions, and draw levies from their vassals as it suits their purpose; but at last, as industrial institutions arise, the labour of general defence becomes the exclusive duty of a small minority; and though the array of soldiers in a standing army may be more imposing by number and discipline than the rude levies of ancient times, the military spirit throughout the nation declines. It loses its pre-eminence with the aristocracy, of which it was the prerogative, and sinks into the condition of an ordinary profession. At last, as manners become more soft, conscription is resorted to as the only means of providing for a service which few undertake for the love of it.

While plutocracy is gaining the mastery over the other social elements, and the people are coming to prefer the

* Grote, *History of Greece*, ii. 143; vi. 608. Lord Macaulay (*Hist. of England*, iv. 409) contrasts Ajax, Horatius, Robert Bruce, with the hunchbacked dwarf leading the French and the asthmatic skeleton leading the English at Landen in 1693.

fitful labour and the luxury of civic, to the hardy and regular simplicity of rural life, this change becomes more conspicuous. If wealth alone is most in request, what man of spirit goes to a profession in which he can never hope to become wealthy? Commerce too, by every principle of its nature, harmonises with peace and softness of manners. It cannot live under any form of social order, when the majority does not combine to check every invasion on the sanctity of property; and they who cross the frontiers of their native land for the purpose of acquiring property by trades, hate those who cross them for the purpose of acquiring property by arms. There are some virtues and some vices in a brigand which a trader does not possess, and the converse is equally true.

And even when a civic population has the will to go to war, it has not always the power, for the habits and employments of town and factory life are not those which the recruiting serjeant approves. The rustic is inured to hardship and fatigue before he enters the camp. He, like the country gentleman, has spent his life in field sports, which, as has been prettily said, are the "image of war without its guilt." The citizen before he can stand a campaign has to harden and exercise his body*; and this transition from softness and luxury to hardship and endurance of labour, is one which must necessarily be gone through by the conscript, but which would deter volunteers from entering an army, and when undergone, it is not generally attended with any remarkable success. The early years of life are those in which the frame is moulded either for strong muscular work, or for the nervous occupations of a town. The recruit who comes from a factory or a shop has generally too delicate a frame to bear the seasoning, and finds his way to the hospital with no intervening battle-field. And among the different

* "Fortior miles ex confragoso venit: segnis est urbanus et verna. Nullum laborem recusant manus, quæ ad arma ab aratro transferuntur, in primo deficit pulvere ille unctus et nitidus."—*Seneca, Epist.* 51.

kinds of rustic populations, it has always been observed that the richer they are the worse soldiers they make *; for at home they spend their wealth, however small, in personal luxuries, which, when they have become habitual, it costs them no small trial, both physical and moral, to forego in the camp. The Highlanders were our best soldiers when they, among English subjects, had the fewest wants; for it is not mere poverty that makes good soldiers, but an absence of what we call habitual comforts, and, consequently, of a desire for luxury; and so those peasants are the best soldiers who at home are accustomed to the smallest amount of luxury. The worst soldiers drawn from the peasant class are the German, because at home they are accustomed to comparative ease and luxury.

For all these reasons, purely commercial nations, though from among the wild progeny of the plutocracy they can sometimes furnish good officers; and though those of their professional men who have more leisure than they like, and the more gallant of their clerks and warehousemen, may form excellent corps of volunteers, yet are such nations deficient in the raw material of hardy soldiers, fit for rough campaigns. Defence is necessary; national trade often needs the seizure and tenure of foreign stations, and wars of passion are common with democracies; but to carry on the warfare, the rich and soft citizens decline leaving their gilded saloons or their snug parlours, but open their tills, and hire the sinews of hardy free lancers from foreign lands.

Though the commercial nation loves peace in the sense of hating aggression by other persons, or the fear of it, though the commercial man loves peace in the sense of being too soft-handed for the sword and too tenderly raised for the camp, though the commercial minister whose popularity depends on his governing cheaply

* Montesquieu, *Esp. des Lois*, xviii. c. 4.

shuns when he can the risk of large military expenses, it would be grievously against history if we thought a nation of traders was naturally averse to carry on war when it can send more valiant men than its own citizens to battle for them. Carthage, which had won for itself a large territory in Africa, had possessed Spain, and had founded and fortified many trading stations in Italy, Sardinia, and Sicily, boasted not merely a splendid military marine, but sent forth the greatest general that the world has seen, although his soldiers were a motley crew of vagrants from Italy, Gaul, Spain, and the islands of the Mediterranean, joined with the Lybian conscripts.* Who knows not the Venetian conquests, and the poles, now bare, on the Piazza di San Marco, on which once waved the standards of Cyprus and the Morea? who knows not the gallant sea-fights whose memory the two Vandeveldes have perpetuated more effectually than the historian? In all these warlike achievements it will be observed that plutocracies prefer a navy to an army; partly, no doubt, this has arisen from the maritime situation of their cities and the easy conversion of a commercial into a military marine; but policy too has told the statesman of a plutocracy that military strength and military successes, unless the central power is checked by independent nobles, form sure steps towards despotism. De Witt, the ablest of the Dutch statesmen, and a strong partizan for the plutocracy against the pretensions of the House of Orange, was ever anxious to reduce the army and increase the fleet, a policy which was in the end disastrous; for while it succeeded in preventing the erection of a despot by purely Dutch means, it weakened the power of resisting foreign intervention on his behalf.

It is in their army that the nations in this stage of coexistent plutocracy and democracy fail. Generally, the democrats are too soft themselves to take arms, but even

* See Livy, xxviii. 12.

when there is in the native population a sufficient number of hardy men to take the field, the plutocrats, who are naturally unwarlike, fear that to send out a native army would be to arm the democracy themselves. The resource of the plutocrats is therefore to employ foreigners, who, paid by them, will at least have more reason to fight for them than for the democracy in case the two social elements should come into conflict. Thus the difficulty in Carthage and Venice did not merely arise from the want of native soldiers, but also of warlike plutocrats, to lead whatever raw material of an army there might be among the citizens. In an aristocracy the chief men are warlike and form the natural leaders of the army. In the field they in fact strengthen their supremacy, and are the more readily obeyed during peace by those whom they have commanded in war. Foreign war conducted by native troops at the expense of the state strengthens an aristocracy but weakens a plutocracy.

The result is, that the safety of nations far advanced in this stage depends upon their hirelings; and better pay or some sudden whim may easily turn them to destroy the city they have lived by saving.* The officers are generally foreigners, for in a plutocracy the military profession is sometimes regarded as a derogatory service, a consequence which naturally follows from the habit among plutocracies of estimating men only by their

* This was the custom with the mercenaries which the feeble plutocracies of Greece employed against the Macedonians (see Niebuhr, *Hist. Rom.* iii. 478); and as to the disrepute and helplessness of Venice in matters of war, in the seventeenth century, see Burnet, who in his letters from Switzerland and Italy, 1686 (p. 147), says, "The reputation of their (the Venetian) service is of late years so much sunk, that it is very strange to see so many come to a service so decried, where there is so little regard had of the officers; the arrears are so slowly paid, and the rewards are so scantily distributed, that if they do not change their maxims, they may come to feel this very sensibly: for, as their subjects are not acquainted with warlike matters, so their nobility have no sort of ambition that way, and strangers are extremely disgusted."

wealth, for military men when there is no aristocracy are, as a class, poor. Sir William Temple, coming from a country where the officers of the army were of the highest rank and the best blood, was struck with the singularly different spectacle presented by the Dutch plutocracy and commercial democracy, which regarded all soldiers as the servants of the civilians. There is something of the same feeling to be observed between the civilians and the military in British India.

It is scarcely necessary to say that a community which is compelled to hire foreign legions does not itself send forth mercenaries for the hire of other states. The adventurers who leave nations in this stage of coexistent plutocracy and democracy, in all later stages of national existence go forth to earn their bread by civil employments.* They are artisans, clerks, professors, pedagogues, doctors, teachers of languages, but never soldiers. So that the occupations of the adventurers which leave a nation, afford a sure criterion of the stage of development in which that nation is.

Thus the small states of Greece up to the days of Philip supplied hardy mercenaries to the princes and satraps of the East; in the days of the Roman empire their adventurers, instead of supplying thews and sinews for their employers, supplied them with rhetoric and philosophy. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from Italy came the hired defenders of Constantinople. The Pisan troops were with the Varanges (who were probably Danes), the only true soldiers who fought for the Greek emperor† whose subjects they heartily despised, while the Greeks themselves were travelling about Europe as the teachers of languages and literature. In the fifteenth century the Italians had not only ceased to supply mercenaries, but actually themselves employed

* Mill, *Political Economy*, i. 62.

† Michaud, *Hist. des Crois.* iii. 164.

the famous condottieri, whose bands, hired by hostile cities, used to come to a mutual understanding, and keep up the show of fight without drawing each other's blood.

Some of these free lancers, who fought in the pay of the Italian plutocracies in the sixteenth century, were Dutchmen.* A century later and the Dutch were circulating over the two hemispheres, no longer as soldiers, but as the evangelists of the arts of making wealth by commerce and peaceful handicrafts.

And so in the train of Sir John Hawkwood† followed many a gallant Englishman, who fought for the enervated citizens that hired him. Still we can furnish volunteers to the cause of liberty in foreign lands, but when we have a heavy war we are compelled to send to the scums of the continental nations to come and fight for us. The supply we obtained during the Crimean war was of the most vile quality, for the only true mercenaries of this century are the Swiss, and they are in sufficient demand among the despots of the Continent. Mountaineers are nearly always strong and energetic in athletic occupations. The very nature of their country inures them to hardship, and as habitual use generates desire of use, so their thews and sinews, developed by climbing their native fastnesses, have (I would say it with the leave of theorists on volition) some influence on their desire to bear arms. The youthful swarms, fitted by their early life for the camp rather than the counting-house, go forth to make money by their valour, and now, as they did a century and a half ago, regard the military occupations with the most favour.‡

* St. Réal, *Conjur. contre Venise*, p. 38.

† Hallam, *Middle Ages*, i. 499.

‡ The writer of the "Account of Switzerland, written in 1714," p. 142, tells us that the Swiss who had served in foreign armies were most esteemed when they returned home, "both because they are the most polite, and because the trade of arms is reckoned here the most honourable. . . . It is certain that the most considerable fortunes

If then we find a nation of which the adventurers go out as mercenaries, we may assume that it is not in this stage of coexistent civic democracy and plutocracy; and, on the contrary, we must recognise the habitual hiring of mercenaries as a sign of a nation governed by a plutocracy or by a despot. Nations do not, when they first enter this stage of plutocracy, hire mercenaries, but they do so eventually if the plutocracy gains the upper hand, and the phase of national existence lasts.

that have been made in Switzerland have been raised by military service, and chiefly of that of France; and the genius of the nation still leads the people to a soldier's life preferably to any other."

Caw! Caw! Caw!

CHAP. XIX.

THE TONE OF A PLUTOCRATIC SOCIETY—THE FINE ARTS.

"The characters of nations depend on the state of society in which they live, and on the political institutions established among them; and the human mind, whenever it is placed in the same situation, will in ages the most distant, and in countries the most remote, assume the same form, and be distinguished by the same manners."—ROBERTSON.

THE unwarlike character of the population in nations in this stage of national existence must be the last item in this dry list of characteristics. There are many others which I have not named, but which a Pre-Raphaelite artist would work in with laborious and effective detail. What I have sought to seize are but the most prominent and the most vital; and let us now throw over the scene, so far as our feeble art allows, its true tone and temper.

What is it that strikes the observer in these hives of industry and opulence into which all social life in such nations concentrates itself? What is it we read on the marble of their merchants' palaces, in the magnificence of their public buildings, in the glittering sumptuousness of the wares exposed for sale? What in the countenances of those merchant princes in their richly decorated halls,—of that busy throng upon the crowded 'Change,—of those showy citizens in their holiday attire—of those bent and sweated forms that work in the factory gangs?

As the memory rises of these citadels of opulence, it is a memory full of splendour and of sadness.

Ah ! it is a burning truth — written, nay rather branded in the deepest characters of shame in the history of plutocratic nations, that the city is not one city but two cities, the city of the rich and the city of the poor. A gulf lies between them ; by no means an impassable gulf ; on the contrary, in the earlier plutocratic stages continually passed and not seldom repassed by individuals and families ; but one thing cannot pass that gulf, and that is sympathy. The rich and the poor — they live together, but they turn their backs upon each other. And yet how splendid are those epochs, how rhetoricians love to dwell upon, and future ages to read of them ! Can anything exceed the charm we feel in conning over the Athens of Pericles and Phidias, the Florence of Lorenzo, and her contemporary Venice, while Antwerp, Brussels, and the other quasi-capitals of the Low Countries, live for ever in the highest and most enduring pages of history. They were cities of splendour, for they were the cities of the rich. To the banquets of the rich we go not unbidden guests, the halls and galleries of their endless palaces dazzle our imagination ; we sit entranced by the fascinating discourse of the elegant philosophers who are interspersed through the company, till the strain on our minds becomes fatiguing, and is relieved by listening to the wit and vivacity of the beautiful and accomplished ladies who fill the measure of delight with all that the most refined luxury can provide for the gratification of human pleasures. The man who himself was the most magnificent example of a plutocrat that has yet appeared in England, has sketched the true ideal of the palace of plutocracies. It is Beckford who writes of the Caliph Vathek :

“ Being much addicted to the pleasures of the table, he sought by his affability to procure agreeable companions ; and he succeeded the better as his generosity was unbounded ; and his indulgences unrestrained ; for he was by

no means scrupulous ; nor did he think with the Caliph, Omar Ben Abdalaziz, that it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy Paradise in the next.

“ He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremme which his father Motassem had erected, on the hill of Pied Horses, and which commanded the whole city of Samarah, was, in his idea, far too scanty ; he added, therefore, five wings, or rather, other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of his senses.

In the first of these, were tables continually covered with the most exquisite dainties ; which were supplied both by night and by day according to their constant consumption ; whilst the most delicious wines, and the choicest cordials, flowed forth from a hundred fountains, that were never extinguished. This palace was called the Eternal or unsatiating Banquet.

“ The second, was styled the Temple of Melody or the nectar of the soul. It was inhabited by the most skilful musicians and admired poets of the time, who not only displayed their talents within, but dispersing in bands without, caused every surrounding scene to reverberate with songs which were continually varied in the most delightful succession.

“ The palace named the Delight of the Eyes, or the Support of Memory, was one entire enchantment. Rarities collected from every corner of the earth were there found in such profusion as to dazzle and confound, but for the order in which they were arranged. One gallery exhibited the pictures of the celebrated Maur, and statues that seemed to be alive. Here, a well managed perspective attracted the sight, there, the magic of optics agreeably deceived it ; while the naturalist on his part, exhibited, in their several classes, the various gifts that Heaven had bestowed on our globe. In a word, Vathek omitted nothing in this palace that might gratify the curiosity of those who resorted to it ; although he was

not able to satisfy his own; for he was, of all men, the most curious.

“The Palace of Perfumes, which was termed likewise the Incentive to Pleasure, consisted of various halls, where the different perfumes which the earth produces, were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold; flambeaus and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the too powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be avoided by descending into an immense garden; where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odours.

“The fifth palace, denominated the Retreat of Joy, or the Dangerous, was frequented,” &c.

Such is the magnificent ideal towards which the palaces of the rich in plutocratic ages approach. The irresistible charm of Venice at the present day consists in the romance of leaving earth to live in the ocean, in a city of such palaces, though now their frescoes fade and their halls are silent to all but the voice of lamentation.

Our towns are soon to be studded with palaces like these: we, who belong not to the class of poor, shall live and shine in such as they were; the splendour and luxury of our cities will soon leave far behind the similar glories of Athens, Florence, Venice, Antwerp, Amsterdam, or Paris. Shall we in whose veins the fire and ambition of youth yet burn, lament that it is ours to live in such an age, or mourn, like Milton, that we were born too late?

“Fortune makes many promises to many,
Keeps them to none. Live to the days and hours,
For nothing is your own.”

Ah! does it signify that the streets are haunted by the pale and deformed victims of our luxury and vanity? those beautiful fabrics among which we revel, each of them is deadly after a fashion of its own to the artisans who made them. Behold those gorgeous mirrors that give its look of dazzling ceaseless sumptuousness, and multiply


without limit the colossal proportions of the saloon in which we recline. Ah, let us turn away from them! Oh horror! to me they reflect but the quivering forms, and the darkened skin, and the blackened teeth, and the wandering eyes of the poor poisoned silverers who made them. Oh how bright and radiant the velvettèd furniture, how beautiful the taste of those triple wove hangings! let us go towards the window and examine them; but look not out of that window, or you will hear her hollow cough, and see the stooping seamstress, with her red eyes, and swaying gait, and unstrung frame, who lived with twenty others in one room for a whole fortnight, working night and day that these hangings might be finished by the hour I in my wanton impatience had fixed for them to be ready. They talk of skeleton closets in a house, but what is it to live in a city where the skeletons haunt every public place, and in the midst of your gorgeous luxury speak to you from out of the very articles which minister to it! Who shall not say that sadness shares the throne of splendour!

And apart from all considerations of those who do not partake the splendour, the splendour has a sadness of its own. Compare the amusements of an athletic, hardy population, full of animal spirits, moving well-braced muscles, with those of a luxurious plutocracy; the rough, rude merriment, the hearty shouts, and frolicsome dances on the village green, with the languid concerts and operas, and the soft luxury of the gilded and perfumed banquets. Or, still more, let us contrast the English company, half of them amazons, gay and vigorous, that follow the hounds in full cry, with the reclining beauties and effeminate voluptuaries of a Venetian or an American saloon. That old light of the law, Mr. Justice Doddridge, said well* of hawks and hounds, that "though they be for the most part things of pleasure *that* hindreth

* On the Office of an Executor, p. 143, 14th ed.

not, but they may be valuable as well as instruments of music, both tending to delight and exhilarate the spirits. A cry of hounds hath to my sense more spirit and vivacity than any other music." Some of us may remember Mr. Windham's prophecy in the House of Commons, May 24, 1802, "that seriousness and gravity of manners would destroy merry old England if bull-baiting were abolished." I find among my notes this scrap, culled, I think, from Mr. Thackeray: "England was, in the time of Pope and Gay, a merrier country than the island we now inhabit; the people of all ranks and classes were fonder of amusement; and what between drinking, dancing, dining, supping, and playing at all manner of games, the wonder was that statesmen got through their business at all. The marks of the places where the balls used to roll were still visible in some parts of St. James's Park; but what a change has come over the aspect of society! Fancy Lord Palmerston playing at 'hockey' now-a-days, and Lord John Russell, with his coat off, giving him back the balls. But in those bygone times we were more gregarious and more easily amused than at present." I don't think this is quite correct. There is more amusement now than ever; but it is rather the amusement of luxury and dissipation, expensive and ostentatious sensuality. We have laid aside the heavy drinking of our fathers; but we while away our hours in splendid, refined, and languid profligacy.

This change of manners comes naturally over nations as they become more affected with the civilisation of cities. We may trace it in their poetry and their paintings when we cannot see it with our own eyes. I have often felt this deeply in gazing on the paintings of the Venetians, which afford so striking a contrast with the works of the contemporary Florentines. Florence had much of the robust activity of the aristocratic element remaining in the days of its greatness. Venice had never any civilisation but that of a city. So far is the contrast



carried that Rumohr has even noticed a certain gay and cheerful character in Raffaëlle's Madonnas done after he was in Florence, which does not belong to his earlier paintings produced in the homes of plutocracies; and so the gravity and solemnity of the richly-clad figures in the paintings of the Venetians form their most striking characteristic; the languid smiles of the ladies never show their teeth, and "whatever is the subject, and whatever the figures are doing, the most imperturbable calmness of expression is observable. The heavy eyelid, the 'santo onesto e grave ciglio,' which Giovanni Santi attributes to Battista Sforza, is again a universal characteristic of the pictures of the time."

Those pictures which bear their silent testimony to the sweet melancholy of a plutocratic life; those pictures themselves, what are they but the product of plutocracy? for this is a principle steadily shining through the life of nations, that *the age of plutocracy is the age of the fine arts*.* Bear with me, soft plutocrat, if, in the intervals of that dulcet symphony which floats on the perfumed breezes through your galleries, I discourse to you, reclining on your couch, concerning the place of the fine arts in the progress of nations.

* * * * *

Pure aristocracies are the societies in which there is most of the sublime; pure plutocracies, those in which there is most of the beautiful.

"My friend," says Sarpedon, in the *Iliad*, to Glæucus, "wherefore are we two revered as gods among the Lycians? wherefore are ours the largest domains, ours the first honours at the feast? It is because to us belongs the post of danger, to us the foremost place in the field of battle; and strangers say to our clansmen—Such princes are worthy to command the Lycians."†

* Not including the belles-lettres or oratory.

† Γλαῦκε, τίη δὲ νῶϊ τετιμήμεσθα μάλιστα, κ.τ.λ. II. xii. 310.

There are few things in human society more sublime than the position of these chieftains ; a position continued and carried to a still further elevation by the aristocrats of a conquering tribe. It is not in the office that there is much of grandeur, but in the title to it that is thus displayed. They are raised above their fellows, because most worthy to be so ; and those who would judge a clan by its chiefs would judge highly of the Lycian clan, because of the merits of the Lycian chiefs. The Homeric poems portray a mode of life where a few men were placed foremost in a rank intermediate between the gods and the mass of mankind, with whom they had scarcely anything but their mortality in common ; men who, in their every action, remember their high calling, and display the loftiest of human motives ; and these poems, for that reason, are replete with the purest traits of the sublime. The poetry of the heroic ages of other nations, the old ballads of Gothic nations, likewise abound in traits of the sublime, because their subject is chosen from that state of society to which other poets have to take their readers back when they wish to portray scenes that habitually, and as matter of daily occurrence, bear in them the elements of the sublime. There is a common current of sublimity that runs through the actions of men of lofty minds and feelings in all states of society ; but in no other but the earliest is a class selected and trained for the purpose of acting with heroism and sublimity. And such is the belief in the exaltation and merits of the great, that their very vices excite admiration and approval.*

So far as the acts of the lofty men convey to us ideas of beauty, there is much of the beautiful in the earlier ages ; but the beauty of art, of literature, of civilisation, of refined culture,—in short, the beautiful as contrasted with the sublime,—all this belongs to later and less sublime

* Smith, *Moral Sent.* ii. 21.

ages. Our rude and brave forefathers studied the sublime in their actions, and loved the beautiful in their wives. With that they were content.

It is manifest that in plutocracies, the societies of in-door civic life, passed in peaceful commerce and in the luxury of splendid palaces, there is less scope for the sublime in action than in the earlier warrior ages, but much more tendency to admire and seek the beautiful in art. This is the first coarse reason for the distinction.

In the changes which take place in the national mind may be found reasons more subtle and refined.

Poetry and the rugged eloquence that is akin to it, religious personifying art, the universals of the realists, the angelic essences of scholastic dreamers, all arise from that habit of mind which prevails in the early ages of a nation for seeking out, by no rigid induction, but with easily satisfied and credulous curiosity, the causes of social events, of mental emotions, of physical phenomena, and endowing these airy nothings with a name. Whereas the habits of mind fostered in a scientific, commercial, and practical age, regard rather the phenomena and emotions themselves, and find in each of them the consequence of the past, the cause of the future.

In the age of poetry, of oratory, and of religious and heroic art, the mighty actions of the world all belong to a few great figures. They stand in the foremost rank, acting like heroes, and regarded as demigods by the ignoble crowd behind them. The history of the early ages is the history of the warrior aristocracy, each individual of which is great in force, both physical and moral; great in character (according to the estimate of such ages); great in power to a degree which borders upon the superhuman. The imaginative habits of the people find no apter solution for great events and striking phenomena than to attribute them to a race of heroic personifications, endowed with sympathies, passions, and motives, differing only from these warrior nobles in being invisible and immortal. The

atmosphere of the early ages is haunted with divine essences, which condense into human form upon the slightest provocation. Hence the personifications which introduce so much of the terrible, the mysterious, and the sublime into the poetry, oratory, and art of the earliest ages of a nation.

On the contrary, in the age of science and commerce, this great division is broken down, and though there may be an infinity of little social inequalities between different trades and professions, all men are nearly equal in intellectual culture, and are daily becoming more equal in all respects. There are no great agents between the Creator and His meanest human creature. In such an age universal laws, unvarying relations and principles inherent in created things, are more easy of belief than a system of government requiring many great and grand agents. There are not the living prototypes after which to embody the personified idea; and the age is governed partly by the researches of the retired and analytic mind, trained in the schools of exact science, and averse from every conclusion which has not logic or demonstration to support it, and partly by the dry practical habits acquired in and diffused from the counting-house. Shall we wonder that in these times of dry, hard, unimaginative thinking, the flights of oratory become ridiculous; the imagination of poetry is either confined within the narrowest and most trifling bounds, or, bursting them, runs wild without shame or sense; and the efforts of art, when they attempt to be heroic and sublime, confine themselves to subjects from past history, or from the deep feelings common to human nature, as powerful beneath the beggar's rags as the peer's ermine, in whose manifestation consists the poetry of common life?

Large heroic representations of contemporary scenes have an air of vulgarity to a people among whom there is much social equality, because they convey a notion of pretension, the essence of vulgarity, and they are absurd

because they represent their subjects in a guise we know to be unnatural and unusual to them. It is not so in an heroic age, when the achievements of one small class of the community are by nature heroic, and the members of that class in every action and gesture of their life assert an acknowledged supremacy in power, in tone, in many high ethical qualities, to their subject race, whom they inspire with that degree of mingled wonder and terror which is necessary to the sublime.

The people of early ages, perceiving their own little world governed by a small number of powerful potentates, so far raised above them in the scale of society that they seem superior in the scale of nature, imagine for the government of the world at large a series of personified agents, whose function is to administer the decrees of the Creator, in a manner the more sublime because obscure as well as terrible. This was not merely a dream of polytheistic nations, populating Olympus with an immortal aristocracy headed by a great king, like the monarch of the early ages only one of the aristocrats who has elevated himself above the rest by intrigue and cabal; but it was likewise the belief of Christian nations, who found in the saints of the calendar, the angelic body, whose presence haunted every sacred grove, materials for the gratification of this craving for representing divine personages in the only form that we can appreciate — the human.

Here then is another source of the sublime denied to later ages, whose inquiring faith refuses to believe that the Creator governs by the intervention of personified and invisible agents, though reserved in some modified measure to the Christian, who can still assume to represent the founder of his religion in his earthly manhood.

Early art is always devotional. It aims to interpret to man the powers that rule his world. The first representations of human personages are always introduced under some religious pretext. When they are dead they are deified, and their portraits are therefore representations of divinity.

The first portrait of a living person that appears on coins with a Greek legend is that of Alexander the Great, but it is managed surreptitiously by introducing his features into the head of Hercules, which usually appeared enveloped in his lion's skin on Macedonian coins. The first portrait-statues were statues of victors at the sacred games, those being most worthy of the divine honour of representation who had excelled in the games by which the gods were honoured*; and even then these portrait-statues represented the general characteristics of the most athletic and powerful class, the nearest akin therefore to the gods, rather than the individual peculiarities of the members of that class. So also scenes of contemporary history seldom, if ever, employed the painter's brush except when devotion required them to be represented. The events of a man's life, however striking and pictorial, were only represented upon the memorial tablet which he suspended in the temple as an offering to the god who had preserved him through them.†

In the early ages of Christian nations, the splendour of their art, too often the mere glitter of barbaric gold, was reserved for the service of the Church. King Clovis, after his conversion, conducted into a cathedral, said that he believed he was already in Paradise, so vastly did that scene exceed in splendour the objects to which he was accustomed. And when in time the great warriors and chieftains engaged the sculptor's chisel or the painter's brush, they were nearly always represented in devotional attitudes, returning thanks for help, or, as intermediate between God and man, interceding for divine favour.‡ It was perhaps one step down from the sublime to represent mortal men at all, but art still adhered to so much of the sublime as never to represent any mortals but those who

* Müller, *Anc. Art.* § 420. † Hor. *Od.* i. 6, 13. *Sat.* ii. 1, 33.

‡ So the sepulchres of the early Spanish kings had two effigies, one representing the king as a monarch armed and arrayed in royalty, the other in the garb of a monk. Ford, *Handbk.* xlvii. 7.

in the scale of human estimation were nearest to the immortal.

There is not only more encouragement to the artist or the sculptor to represent the sublime in ages when personal inequalities are a marked feature of society, but also he then alone has the requisite materials from which to gather his notion of the sublime. For no artist has ever achieved anything really great whose art had not been intensely national, like the great man in literature, or science, or statesmanship, inspiring and inspired by his age. Critics* have remarked that the best painters of Scripture subjects never attempt to represent their heroes as Jews, but give to each the features of his own countrymen. Now Raffaele and Michael Angelo had, in the countries in which they lived, and in the classes with whom they associated, persons who would enable them to represent the sublime, and yet be national. Not so Rubens, of whom Sir Joshua Reynolds says, that "in his representations of the highest characters in the Christian or the fabulous world, instead of something above humanity which might fill the idea which is conceived of such beings, the spectator finds little more than mere mortals, such as he meets with every day"†, and those fat Flemish mortals. And as Raffaele and Michael Angelo had advantages for copying the sublime, so most of the mediæval painters had advantages for studying the religious; for, as has been well remarked, a feminine austerity of expression, inspiring us with an idea of true religious feeling, belongs peculiarly to the features of the mediæval ecclesiastics.‡

* Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, i. 120. To his instances may be added that of Murillo,—his Madonnas and Christs are all natives of Andalusia.

† Reynolds's *Works*, iii. 223.

‡ The nationality of art received a curious illustration in the representation of the Last Supper in a window in the church of Soest, in Westphalia, where our Saviour and the twelve apostles are seated before a gammon of bacon, the topping dish of the country, instead of the paschal lamb. Laconica, 1702, part iii. No. 75.

I would then venture to believe that these propositions deserve to be established :—

1. *That the blind unenquiring faith which prevails in the early ages of a nation is the cause of the great predominance of religious subjects in the arts of representation, while the fertility of imagination, likewise peculiar to those ages, fosters a continual artistic activity.*

2. *That the heroic and lofty models presented by the life of those or of the ages then in recent tradition, enable the artist and the sculptor to represent the sublime both in divine and in human personages, with some aid from present times, and with little fear of becoming ridiculous.*

3. *That the best period of religious and sublime art is the period when the anarchy of thought first approaches.*

There are, as it were, two currents passing through the national history. First, the current of devotional imagery, which, in its earlier form, leads men to fashion idols and symbols, and other rude helps to devotional recollection. These were the old *ξόανα* and *εἰδωλα* of the Greeks, the *simulacra* and *imagines* of the Romans, and the *simulacros imagenes* of the Spaniards.* In painting, the same necessity gave rise to the lachrymose martyred saints and wasted anchorites which adorned the walls of the earliest Christian churches.† This state of art undergoes modification, while the early uninquiring faith of nations assumes a more rational form. The people who at first use these idols to impress themselves vividly with the idea of the celestial and interceding agents, and the quasi-metaphysical abstractions to which active power is in these early ages attributed, gradually, as they grow more refined, become anxious that the imitative art of mankind should deck these images in its best array ; and in order to present to human admiration historical or divine personages, they learn to take for their models the

* Ford's Handbook of Spain, i. 109, 110.

† On this head the enormous list of "artists" among the Dominicans supplies food for considerable reflection.

finest and most lovely specimens of humanity. The second current is one of artistic skill. This does not rise in a nation till some considerable advance has been made towards refinement and intellectual culture. Now, the best period of religious art is manifestly that during which these currents blend in equal proportions.

The early sculptors of Greece, who did not open the eyelids of their figures or raise the arm from the side, but instilled into their marble a severity and repose supernatural in its degree, lived in the age of Grecian art when grandeur was accomplished, but grotesqueness not laid aside. The same phase in Italian art is presented by Giotto's paintings, for he lived before these two currents of religious sublimity and polished art had well blended. He is sublime, grand, religious, but, in comparison with his successors, archaic and unfinished. The more sublime on that account, for a certain degree of obscurity in a terrible object increases the emotion of the sublime excited by it. When refinement in execution, which is nearly allied in common minds with perfection in artistic effects, increased in Greece*, Pericles bade his contemporary artists not forget that sedate simplicity and tranquil majesty, by which the earlier sculptors managed to inspire into their works so much of grandeur. Michael Angelo was more finished and accomplished in the learning and subtleties of art than Giotto; but he never forgot the rude grandeur and the bold sublimity that no one now could venture upon. Raffaele, like Michael Angelo, lived at the time when, in Italian artistic development, the two currents had blended. They are religious and sublime, but, at the same time, masters of finished art: Raffaele, the more fond of lovely art; Michael Angelo, the more grand and religious. It was this growing predilection for the representations of grace and loveliness to the old rude grandeur of devotional representation that led enthusiasts like Savonarola†, even so early as the close

* Bell, *Anat. of Expression*, p. 215.

† Madden's *Life of Savonarola*, p. 123.

of the fifteenth century, to complain of the naturalism of art. Art, in the view of these gloomy religionists, was but the gratification of the lust of the sense of sight. How much juster is the complaint against the schools of the Renaissance, which flourished after the first current had shown a complete impotence in its rivalry with the second! They are artistic, but though they deal with sacred subjects, not religious, their worship of their subject has faded away, and it appears to their minds only as the means by which they may display their powers. The beautiful is no longer a means but an end.

After the departure of the early devoteeism there is this distinction: The nation, instead of its fond imagery and idolatry, adopts either infidelity or a more reasonable though colder faith. In the first alternative the arts may still be employed about sacred subjects, but the faith of the painter, and with it his truth and depth, are gone, and we have only such productions as those with which the unbelief of the later Roman empire has encumbered us;—mythological and divine subjects, handled by artists who believed the gods to be a snare and a deception; and such as emanated from the Renaissance in Italy and France, whose artists, taking the romance of Christianity in a more poetical point of view, dealt with it, and with the legends and fables of revived paganism, in a style of hollow unbelief, which has Giulio Romano and Nicolo Poussin for its greatest masters. Giulio Romano's Madonnas were all Junos, his apostles heathen philosophers, and his representations of God mere Jupiters. Such art as this has little of the sublime in it, however pretty the pictures may be as works of art and exercises of a highly poetical imagination. The painters did not believe their figures to represent beings really wonderful, terrible, or powerful, and therefore they do not inspire in the spectator the corresponding emotions which, in their combination, give him the feeling of the sublime; and painters, as it has been said, ceasing to

make holy men and women, "tended to habituate the eye and taste to scenes of indecency, which is one of the causes of the open dissoluteness of Italian society." *

In the other alternative, the pith and core of religion is retained, stripped of the imaginative accessories with which the fond belief of early ages had enveloped it. That is Protestantism. But with these accessories perishes the art that knew so well how to embody and shadow them forth. In Protestant nations religious art almost ceased when they became Protestant.† If they were not iconoclasts, like the Puritans, their faith was so much the result of internal and passionless contemplation, that they felt disgust at the idea of a painter assisting devotion.

This opportunity for being sublime, explains how it is that *true religious art belongs to that period of the national career which marks the commencement of the acme.*

At that period the source of the sublime found in early ages in the position and qualities of the aristocrats, is not destroyed, but changed. They are no longer sublime, merely because they are individually possessed of more physical force and bravery than other persons. The word *ἀριστοι* has lost its meaning of the "most valiant," and come to signify the best, although the men who then stand foremost in the state and demand its highest places, are marked by an intrepidity of character, which, perhaps, is more real bravery than the daring of a soldier. At that age which had already begun in Athens when Solon appeared, which was marked in Roman history by Cato and his contemporaries, and in Italian by Dante, and which, owing to the good fate of England's slow

* Drummond, ap. Whiteside, Italy, i. 59.

† "Pour les arts, il est très constant que la réforme en a plutôt reculé ou arrêté les progrès, qu'elle ne les a favorisés; car quel est le pays protestant qui ait eu des peintres, des sculpteurs, tels qu'en eurent l'Italie, l'Espagne, les Pays-Bas, l'Allemagne même, avant la réformation."—*Denina, La Pruss. Litt. sous Fréd. II.* vol. i. p. 15. See Ruskin, *Shores of Venice*, i. 22, 23.

development, has been able to embrace at once Selden, Somers, More, Strafford, and Lord Chatham ;—in ages such as these there are moving on the scene of contemporary life great and self-reliant men, who inspire the crowds that they compel to bow before their genius and moral grandeur with feelings of wonder and admiration, even when not of fear. With minds nurtured by the present contemplation of these men, aristocratical in their nature, whatever be their position by birth, or their theoretical opinions, reflecting persons like Æschylus, Sophocles, Dante, Milton, themselves great examples of the lofty in character, found it not strange to them to depict the sublime in human and divine affairs. Fruitful to afford noble models for those who would elevate the mind, whether by poetry or painting, these great men more palpably assisted the poet than the artist, as painting for other than religious purposes is generally a production of a later stage ; and the religious painter, in transferring their mien and characters to the scenes he depicted, disguised them by an apotheosis. Yet, in the admiration of succeeding generations lives the recent memory of these men, great by force of character as their predecessors were great by arms : men by whose contemplation, as Dante magnificently says, we are exalted in our own esteem ; and their severe example is not without its effect upon ages in which they have no successors,—ages when painting becomes one of the ornamental arts that minister to sensuous luxury. When and why does non-religious painting most flourish in a nation ? Upon this I take leave to lay down one or two positions :—

4. *That apart from the consideration of the subjects of artistic representation, the stage of mixed plutocracy and democracy is that which is most fitted to foster non-religious painting.*

That in this stage the art of painting is most extensively practised, is manifest from history ; nor are the reasons for its doing so difficult to be perceived.

In the first place, the tastes of the seigneur are for pomp and circumstance of retinue and of estates. He glories in sports, he aims to be a great potentate in his country, and if he can, in Parliament. As for his mansion, no expense is grudged. It is solid, imposing, and furnished with enormous outlay, but he leaves the details to his upholsterer. Not so the genuine plutocrat. His tastes are all for in-door elegance; he cares not for his stud, or his farm, or his park; it is his town palace, and its splendour and opulence and taste in which he revels.* The times when fortunes are most easily made are the times when most money is spent; and there can be, in the opinion of plutocrats, no better way of spending money or of giving an air of splendour and sumptuousness to the interior of their palaces than by purchasing a gallery of magnificent paintings. Next, there is in all men a certain desire of and admiration for the beautiful. In persons who live in and enjoy the country, this is in a great measure satisfied by the country objects around them; they may study the beautiful there, not merely in the scenery and in the growth of the fields and gardens, but in their cattle, and their horses, and in the peasants' families. How different from those of town artisans! Now in town plutocrats this longing of the mind is left unsatisfied. The painter's art comes forward to supply the void. The reserve force of rural settlement, which has been unconsciously accumulating in the financier's mind while he is at the dry sordid calculations of his counting-house, give him more conscious pleasure in the beauties of his gallery in the long summer evening than he would probably derive from it had he been all day living in its view, or in view of natural objects of beauty which might satisfy his love for the beautiful as often as it rose in his mind. This

* The contrast between the English nobleman's mansion and the Italian palazzo is well remarked by Sir C. Bell, *Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression*, 3rd ed. p. 3.

mode of cultivating the beautiful belongs peculiarly to persons who have lived a town life. Landscapes are more popular in a city than in the country, because they supply in some small measure that want the citizen "long in populous city pent" feels often unconsciously, but not the less acutely.* Had he a beautiful prospect within ten minutes' walk he would not be so tempted to buy a landscape as if he lived all the year round in a smoky street. What wish has the ploughman, as he "homeward plods his weary way," to see a painting of the fields in which he has been working since six o'clock in the morning?

And in the landscapes of those who were still more removed by force of situation from country life and scenes than plutocrats generally are, there is to be observed this deep longing for a rural natural scene. In the landscapes of Titian and Tintoret has been traced by Mr. Ruskin, not as I think with unjustified fancy, an earnest, thoughtful melancholy that marks the late satisfaction of a long craving appetite. It is certain, at least, that the two most grand and feeling painters of landscapes, Tintoret and Titian, belonged to and painted for a city which, from its situation, was, above all that have ever existed, debarred from enjoying the beauties of the fields and woods. And the third great Venetian painter, wholly reared and trained in Venice, delighted in representing cavaliers and ladies seated beneath the shade of trees in

* I have been amused by observing the advice of some clergymen to "the people" (*Politics for the People*, 1848, p. 5). They first enjoin to the working man, "never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful;" and then tell him to go and see real trees if he can, if not, to spend his leisure time in picture galleries, "the townsman's paradise of refreshment." The result will be that his pale thin wife and drooping children will look as beautiful to him as the angels and cherubs on canvas. However painful the condition of things which gives origin to this advice, we cannot avoid being struck with its grotesque mode of teaching men how to learn the beautiful in the human creatures with whom they associate.

landscapes of surpassing beauty, employed in conversation or in music. In these sketches of Giorgione there is more of sweet melancholy even than in his portraits. The Dutch, too, debarred by the narrowness and flatness of their country from any fine or striking views, delighted in landscapes where waterfalls and mountains were prominent features. Except when representing actual scenes, the best Dutch landscape painters always introduce a hill into their backgrounds*, and very often a cascade; and the brothers Van Eyck, when they adorned the cathedral of Ghent, filled the backgrounds of their landscape with orange trees and cypresses and date palms, and all the rich vegetation of southern latitudes.†

And as countrymen abstain from painting landscapes, so the Venetians — Tintoret, Titian, Veronese, Giorgione, Bellini — never introduce a ship when they can avoid it‡, for the same reason. Each has enough in the reality, and has no need to multiply by representation.

The same cravings of the national mind which rule the painter in his choice of subject, rule likewise the poet. By whom is "pastoral" poetry, the representation by words of shepherd rural life, most cultivated? Not by those who live the life it depicts, not by the poets of the early rural ages, but by the cultivated artists of verse who sing for artificial, town-living courtiers. The four greatest pastoral poets are Theocritus, Virgil, Tasso, and Pope. The first composed his pastorals for the most refined and profligate court in ancient Greece, that of Hiero; the second told, to the luxurious artificial rich who surrounded the throne of Augustus, of scenes of country innocence and delight, to them interesting if for no other reason because they were unknown; the third wrote for the court

* I have observed this particularly in the backgrounds of Paul Potter, Both, and Berchem, and in the compositions of Ruysdael, in the Museum of Amsterdam. I apprehend the observation might be extended.

† Humboldt, *Cosmos*, ii. 781.

‡ Ruskin's *Turner's Harbours of England*.

of Ferrara ; and the fourth addressed an audience who had their heads in powder and their persons in claret-coloured suits, and informed them, ignorant of it, that there was happiness and prettiness in the simple peasant's life. So that in the same manner as the townsman likes landscape because he does not live in the country, the palace-hunting courtier, refined till he is no longer natural, likes to read of simple country nature.

The Spaniards are an instance — perhaps the only one — of a cultivated people who cared neither for pastoral poetry nor for landscape. The reason is, they never lived in large overbuilt towns, secluded from nature, so as to long for a representation of the country from which they were shut out, nor was their mode of life so devoid of real poetry and adventure, or of association with the country, as to need to resort to mock pastorals.

Akin to this longing in a townsman for country scenes and tales is the longing for some exercise of the imagination. In a settled peasantry there is a continual strain of narrative poetry and imagery, rude but highly imaginative. Now in a town life, with its prosaic occupations, poems and songs of an imaginative character flourish but poorly. In the touching scenes of a painting, as in a novel, there is some compensation for the deprivation of the natural healthy exercise of the imagination which a routine life in a dull street involves. Painting is the poetry of commercial life, and better suits the lassitude engendered by the labour and the idleness of towns. It is less trouble to gaze upon a painting, and let the sensations inspired by it arise in the mind, than to read, and thoroughly understand and feel a poem, unless indeed it be of the "spasmodic" school ; and unhappily for listeners, it is also more easy to criticise a painting without knowing anything of the true canons of criticism, than it is to talk without absurdity about a literary composition. If Dryden's * dictum, that the principal end of painting is to

* Parallel between Poetry and Painting. Works, xvii. 301.

please, and the chief design of poetry is to instruct, be true, there is another cogent reason why a pleasure-loving and lazy plutocracy prefers the artist to the author. Nor need we longer wonder why, on the one hand, the stern and self-denying Romans of the republic endured to be instructed by authors and dispensed with the pleasures of the artist; and on the other hand, the sensual plutocracy of Rome, in Domitian's reign, discouraged troublesome poets, but patronised to an extent before unknown the art of painting, for it was one of the arts of delight.

There is yet another reason why the art of representation, and particularly one that allows to the artist great power of throwing his own emotions and sympathies into the representation, flourishes most in the later stages of national development. The mental habits of all young nations are objective. Their minds are filled with the rapid sensations conveyed from the outer world, and the resemblances, and differences, and varied relations of external objects absorb their thoughts. They then see natural objects with their natural eyes naturally, and do not wish to see them through the colours of a distorting imagination. Later ages,—such as that when plutocracy and town life prevail,—are subjective. They, with less regard to external objects, pursue the inward processes of their mind, weaving hypotheses, and subtle arguments, devising deep mysteries, and peopling their nebulous minds with a phantom population of its own creation. In-door life and large towns, sedentary habits and much desultory reading, conduce to this. The result of it is, that they prefer to contemplate natural objects not barely and wildly, but with the attributes which belong to the fancied populations that inhabit their minds, and, full of subjectiveness, they would gaze upon the representations of nature which have passed through the brain of an artist, and have thus become the means of conveying the sentiments and inward workings of his mind, so that they are rather the signs and symbols of ideas than images of nature, in

preference to gazing on the real natural objects, with whose simpler tales the men of earlier ages are satisfied. Thus, minds long devoted to looking inwards, or communing with the inward movements of other minds, not after the Aristotelic, but after the Platonic fashion, find a new and keen pleasure in the contemplation of paintings, which, more easily than sculpture, can convey this subjective meaning. Yet sculpture can be subjective. The only great sculptor that ever flourished under an advanced plutocracy is distinguished from the ancient and every other sculptor by the overwhelming subjectiveness of his art. Stand for five minutes before a statue or a bust of the days of Pericles, or one of the early Christian sculptors, and then study one of Michael Angelo, and you will feel the difference between objective and subjective art; and when you read his history, you will find him brought up on the terraces and in the hanging gardens of Lorenzo de Medici. It seems to me that this natural connection between subjective art and the peculiarities of life in the plutocratic stage, has not been sufficiently regarded by those who have tried to analyse the German love of art in the present day, and indeed it explains the peculiarities of the school in every country which mingles muddled metaphysics with æsthetics. In England this school is of very recent growth, but is considerably increasing in the number and influence of its members; and coeval with this school of painting rises a similar school of poetry.

Lastly, the possessor of paintings enjoys the delight derived from the contemplation of ingenious and elegant imitation. This will please a merchant or a manufacturer more than it would an agricultural landowner or a feudal noble. The business of the former has given him a keen eye for excellence in the mechanical arts; and even if he is so devoid of sentiment and imagination as not to be touched by the poetry of a picture, he will hang up some minute and well-finished sketch, because perfection of execution is pleasing to him, in the same way as he

delights in decorative art as applied to his furniture and household fixtures. Of all subjects of painting, landscape is that which requires most finish, and in it finish is the most apparent and appreciated.* The Dutch plutocrat, who had time to enlarge his mind by culture and thought, and who liked magnificence and ostentation, gloried, in the days of his early luxury, in Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyke; the Dutch citizen, whose mind was more contracted and his tastes more simple, preferred the minute and careful plodding of Jan Steen, Brouwer, Ouwater, and Vanderheysen—respectable, so long as it was confined to the mean routine of citizen life; ridiculous, when it assumed a higher tone. Later, when Dutch taste was more corrupted, came into favour the productions of Berghem and Both, who manage to combine the faults of the old Dutch school with those of the Italian. Even to this day the taste of the Dutch citizen remains unchanged, and though the art is not equal, the subjects chosen by the Dutch artists of the day are the same as those of their great predecessors in the seventeenth century. The Museum at Harleem, which is the best collection of modern Dutch paintings with which I am acquainted, is full of these representations of in-door scenes, carousing boors, small landscapes, fruit and flowers, painted by living artists.

In fine, though I would not say that the plutocrat has more love of the beautiful in his nature than the aristocrat or the country peasant, he manifests his love more, because he is driven to these artificial ways of satisfying it by the privations of his town-life. The artist but supplies to him that which nature supplies to the countryman.

The taste, therefore, for works of the fine arts is strongest, as their beneficial influence is more needed, in a nation

* So Mr. Ruskin says (*Modern Painters*, i. 199); but I rather think that dead and live game and fruit need more finish. These were favourite subjects with the Dutch and are now with the English schools.

where civic life prevails. To define the favourite subjects of the fine arts, when cultivated under civic patronage, I would lay down this position:—

5.—*That sketches of ordinary life, landscapes, and portraits are the subjects most suited to the tastes of democratic societies, and the last two, together with pompous scenes and ceremonies, to the taste of plutocracies.*

Up to the end of the fourteenth century, while painting was wholly under the influence of the ecclesiastical and aristocratical patrons, scarcely any portraits were painted, and when they were, only by introducing the likeness of some few very distinguished persons into large compositions. Landscape, as the sole subject of a picture, was wholly unknown, being merely used for backgrounds, and then in a manner more symbolical than pictorial; nor had painters, fond rather of the supernatural and elevated, yet learned to “hold the mirror up to nature.”

But these humbler subjects presently arrogated to themselves the painter's art in modern Italy, in like manner as they had, in ancient Greece, weaned away the sculptor from the exclusive service of religion. And there are sound reasons why they should be preferred in democratic and plutocratic societies to the subjects of the earlier and more religious painters.

In the most prosaic age, which, beyond doubt, is that in which town life prevails, attempts to soar, unless they command our admiration by their beauty of execution, have a strong tendency to be ridiculous: this the mere landscape painter need never fear, any more than the mere portrait painter, who copies his model with the conventional admixture of flattery.

The historical painter, especially one who takes his subjects from Greece and Rome, is the only one who, in a prosaic, equalised age, can dare attempt the sublime, for he seizes upon passages of history which have come to us invested with a certain degree of romance and sublimity, because we have an indistinct conception that if we had

seen the original scenes and personages we should have been terrified and wonderstruck. If the artist is happy, he may introduce this sublimity into his canvas, because he is dealing with departed persons whom we acknowledge to have had in former ages a mien and visage to which the distance in time from the vulgarity of ordinary life, lends no small enchantment. He is something like the tragedian, though less fortunate, for tragedy belongs to an earlier stage of national progress, and the tragedian, like *Æschylus* and *Corneille**, may have himself associated with the great men in the greatest times of his country's history; but the historical painter is the contemporary of the later tragedians, who, as *Horace* wisely tells them, must go for their subjects to the *Iliad*, or some other scenes as remote in time. To sublimise his neighbours, either in tragedy or in painting, were simply to caricature and vulgarise them; and the painter of the sublime, in an age not affording sublime human objects, is in great danger of failure, by reason of the incompatibility of the models from which he must study with the spirit of his subject. But the painter in such an age can, without danger, attempt to render the mere beautiful as apart from the sublime, and, as I have shown, the beautiful in art is in great request.

Historical painting forms a transition to portrait painting. The painting of portraits was introduced into Venice by *Gian Bellini*, who died in 1516. Before his time likenesses of living persons were introduced into large pictures, but were never painted on moveable panels; after his time every noble Venetian had his portrait painted.

With regard to the painting of portraits a distinction ought to be observed. It is always a prosaic art, but it is most prosaic when the population is most equal, least prosaic when it is least equal. When the classes of the

* See *Saint-Beuve*, *Port Royal*, i. 129.

nation are severed and distinguished by marked characteristics, portrait painting may rise above mere daguerreo-typing. It has less chance of doing so when, all men being equal, no peculiarities remain to be expressed but those of the animal individual. There are few things more tiresome than the "portrait of a gentleman," when one does not happen to know the original and be amused at the flattery of the artist, or pleased at the likeness to our friend. On the contrary, when a great and illustrious member of a class is well presented on canvas, we see in his portrait the vicar of his class-mates. How strikingly this is exemplified in Giorgione's portraits of Venetian noblemen. Their names and individualities are many of them lost for ever; but there remain in his canvas the soft and delicate features, the full thoughtful eye, the pensive hanging of the countenance, not to speak of the white jewelled hand, and the gorgeous robes, which all seem to be class-characteristics of those merchant-princes, around whose ocean-city so much of romance will ever dwell.

But even when the representation is confined to the individual without reference to his class, the portrait painting of a nation where inequality and originality prevail will be of a higher style than where equality like the French or American has possessed the nation. The less the equality, the greater the liberty to each person of vigorous mind to indulge his genius in originality and in eccentricities, which often lead a proud and confident man by differing from his fellows to excel them. In nations where such differences are frequent and customary, where the just pride of each man in himself does not suffer him to distrust or repress the natural complexion of his nature because it happens to differ from that of the majority, the portrait-painter has a wide and fertile field for his art; and in nations where a crushing equality denies this liberty and invests every character with the common livery, the faithful representation of racy originality is committed

to the caricaturist, and this is why caricature increases as social equality and its concomitant envy increase.

The acute reader will not fail to observe that these positions relate to the circumstances which evoke native artists, not to the circumstances which induce wealthy persons to collect the works of ancient or foreign masters. It is of course true that the nation which is most adapted for the evocation of native artists is likewise that in which the works of foreigners will fetch high prices, as for example we well know that the impoverished and effete plutocracies of Holland and of Italy have been for the last half century gradually selling their *chefs-d'œuvre* to the aristocracy and richer plutocracy of England, which in proportion as it becomes more plutocratic encourages native artists to a degree unknown before among us. But in all ages, in all states of civilised society, there are some persons of elegant and many more of costly taste; and wherever there is a court at all removed from its primeval condition of being merely the head-quarters of the warrior aristocrats, there will be diffused from it throughout the richer courtiers a taste or at least a fashion for possessing paintings, and therefore we often find many a fine gallery of foreign paintings in the mansions of a country whose social conditions have not then arrived at the stage which is favourable to the productions of any native art except the rude religious. Of this Russia is an instance, and our country was so up to the middle of the last century. Though many of our nobles had magnificent galleries of foreign paintings, and encouraged foreign artists like Vandyke, Lely, and Kneller, to come over here; England had till late in the middle of the last century scarce a native artist worth mention, except Hogarth and Gainsborough.*

* Turgot has attempted an explanation for the fact that countries whose nobles purchase the best and most costly works of foreign artists do not always themselves produce a native school, but his explanation appears to me more ingenious than sound. *Cœuvres*, ii. 296.

Whoever, bearing in mind the distinctions which I have sought to establish in this chapter, passes in review the great schools of the fine arts, and observes in connection with them the social conditions of the nations in which those schools flourished, may perhaps come to the opinion that *the style and manner of the artist as much as those of the author are the creatures of his age*. The arts of a nation are not independent adjuncts, capable of being fitted on to it at any period of its existence, but are developed at specified and settled stages of its progress; and are modified by, and in themselves reflect, its varying civilisation.

Contrast the Roman, the Florentine, and the Bolognese schools with the Venetian. The three former, taking their inspiration from the sublimity of divine story, and brought up amid the descendants of a warrior aristocracy, achieved grandeur and majestic dignity, accompanied as they must be by a noble simplicity. The frescoes of Michael Angelo and Raffaele, the epics of art, attest it. The Venetians on the other hand, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, Giorgione, and even in no small degree Titian, chose as their points of excellence splendour of colour, and violence of contrast, displayed amid the richness of Eastern drapery in the multitude and animation of their figures. He who rightly appreciates the political significance of paintings can never stand before the florid canvas of these masters, and not trace in them that love of show, and pomp, and splendour, that joy in mere opulence, delight in costliness for its own sake, which mark indelibly amid the stages of nations, that which I have called the plutocratic. The artists of Venice aim to charm us with the sensual beauty, the luxurious elegance of their paintings, and succeed. They knew their patrons in the Adriatic too well to seek to affect them with the lofty and somewhat ascetic feelings of a haughty and severe mind. The true heroic style is not theirs. Titian, like Virgil, can invest the meanest

subjects with splendour and importance, but he and his compeers — great as they are — knew not the majesty of the Homeric simplicity and the repose of the sublime. They rather wooed the favour of the merchant nobles by their glowing, restless representations of feasts and processions, public ceremonies, and gorgeous marriages, for in such was the delight of the magnificent Venetian plutocracy.*

If the sublime is ventured upon by the artists of a sensual plutocracy or a conceited democracy, without cover of religion to excuse them, they must take care to place the spectator on a safe rock, unmoved by anything but the pleasure of seeing the struggles and sorrows of others, on the principle of Lucretius, "*Suave mari magno,*" &c. There is a degree of sublimity in shipwreck, drowning, and storm scenes, to those who are not engaged in them, because awe and fear are mellowed by the certainty of immunity; and upon this kind of sublime the artists we have mentioned can alone venture with safety of not offending their patrons. If they would avoid starvation, let them not touch upon the sublime which rebukes; let them not put their spectators in the confessional. "He who lives to please, must please to live."

In the old German schools, the productions of the free imperial cities, of which Prague, Nuremberg, Zurich, Munich, Frankfort, Vienna, Augsburg, were the most fertile in painters, are to be observed characteristics plainly explicable according to the principles above enunciated. The painters are distributable into classes: First, Those who, like Albert Dürer and the brothers Van Eyck†,

* Battista Franco, a very celebrated painter of the Roman school, was employed to adorn part of the Library of St. Mark, but the Venetians found his style too dry and severe. Reynolds, Works, i. 239.

† In the historical paintings of the brothers Van Eyck, we first meet with a careful elaboration of the landscape portion of the picture. Humboldt's Cosmos, ii. 78.

laid their chief points of excellence in the minutiae of artistic execution, and the minor details of homely imitation, and individual representation ; artists who naturally arose among townsmen not yet greatly refined nor taught the arts of gorgeous luxury, and who flourished in the same society with professed portrait-painters of a high class of ability and minute finish, of whom Holbein is the prince, and not seldom themselves adventured the same efforts. Secondly, the artists who arose in the same German cities to minister to the tastes of the plutocracy, which had grown to its great wealth since the days when Holbein or Dürer learnt their art. Such was Jean Rottenhauer (died 1606), who transferred to Augsburg the colouring and style of Tintoret ; such also Jean Lys (died 1629), who painted concerts, balls, village feasts, temptations, and historical scenes, after the Venetian model, and the many others whose frescoes are still fading from the halls and galleries of the old German plutocrats. When the commerce of the German towns sank, and the plutocracy became too poor to patronise artists, the native Germans who had a turn for art, like Monheim (died 1686), Henry Roos (died 1631), and Louis Backhuysen (died 1709), migrated to the then more wealthy Holland.

In that country also were two distinct classes of painters, marking the distinct presence of the plutocratic and the democratic elements.

Looking upon the canvas of Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyke, do we not see the same aim at elegance, the same rich colouring, the same large and flowing figures as marked the school of Venice and were chosen because well adapted to the taste of the plutocrat of the Low Countries ? for no painter of the Low Countries succeeded who adopted any other Italian models than the Venetian ; while in the minute (called *par excellence* the Dutch) schools, the citizen, like his prototype in the old German towns, delighted to find a patient and exact representation

of his daily life, his working and playing, his drinking, and his humorous fireside circle, done by artists who aimed to show expertness in the matter-of-fact mechanism of painting, and did not venture upon the splendour in which plutocracy delights. The artist equally sought to please, but it was to please a different class of customers. In another characteristic also, a certain pride in the expertness of mechanism, democratic and plutocratic* artists agree; and this conceit of skill will always show itself in every one who cannot, carried away by the loftiness of his thoughts and his subject, forget, or at least conceal, the art and the artist.

Herein lies one great and broad distinction between the religious and sublime artists on the one hand, and the ingenious, mechanical, landscape, and common-life painters on the other. The first absorb their spectator in the subject; it is not till the deep sensations of awe and wonder have done vibrating through his bosom that he thinks of the merit of the artist who set them in vibration. The others aim principally and chiefly at obtaining immediate credit for their art of imitation. You go up to a common landscape of the Dutch or any other school, and say at once, How well executed! what a neat little picture! what skill and correctness! The more the art is regarded, the less will be the devotion and the awe which the painting inspires. Among plutocracies and democracies it is the art which is in request, the devotion and the awe are irksome. And the sublime of painting requires the idea of power in the subject, and conveys the idea of power in the artist. This is suitable to a nation accustomed to the display of individual power, and not envious or grudging of it; it is hateful to a nation where social equality is established, and the excessive power or eminence of an individual is an habitual object of envy and attack. An artist who ministers judiciously

* Reynolds (i. 92) observes it in the Venetians.

to the public taste for pleasure, and paints portraits well, by his servility atones for his ingenuity.

Another contrast may be observed between the sublime, heroic style of art and that which prevails in nations of mixed plutocracy and democracy. The former derives much of its grandeur from repose. By a few noble figures, invested with a severe but tranquil majesty, is excited the emotion of the sublime.* There can be no search after novelty, no uneasy restlessness in such a style. Turn to the painters of Holland; their boors are all busy in ceaseless minute activity, unconscious of any repose except that produced by liquor and tobacco. Turn to those of the plutocratic Venetian and Flemish schools; all is bustle and press. Large multitudes are moving about in pomp or merriment; or, as sometimes happens, assisting at a martyrdom or a miracle. In both of these schools there is a constant unrest of subject as well as a restlessness in the painters, who are ever seeking some new effect to startle and to dazzle. Now, the character of aristocracy is a haughty repose, unwilling to move; but when it does move, its movements, like those of a rock, are simple but terrible. The character of democracy is restlessness; it is always in unceasing and minute movement, like the sands washed by the sea. The character of plutocracy is restlessness combined with ostentation; its movements, too, are those of a heap of sand, but some particles are gilt, and wish, by wriggling up to the top, to catch the sun's rays, that they may be distinguished from the mean ungilt particles with which they unwillingly consort.

The artist of the sublime takes for his subject a few grand figures, whose mien and dignity—be it divine or

* Sir Charles Bell says, "Among the excellencies which distinguish the Greek artists, the first and most admirable is that gravity of style,—that sedate grandeur of expression, and prevailing tranquillity of soul, which still appear under the most terrible agitation and passion."—*Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression*, p. 216.

human—shall alone inspire us with awe. He scorns accessories, he avoids crowds; if they are present, they are but the shadow of the hero. It is in the mien and character of the hero, inseparable from him, and not derived from any temporary accident of situation, that such an artist finds his materials for the sublime. Now, this is the nature of the simpler and better aristocracies. They cultivate a loftiness of character, a high tone of honour, a proud, rough, energetic dignity, dependent upon rectitude, or what they believe to be rectitude, which would remain the possession of each aristocrat though he were stripped of his power and his retainers by those who could not deprive him of the spirit of Porus. It is that species of character, self-reliant because of good conscience, that prevailed so largely among the old Romans previously to the epoch of luxury and intellectual intoxication which was begun by the reduction of Carthage. In their simple farms, themselves directing the plough, yet fitted for stations of the highest trust, these ancient Romans, all imbued as they were with the best spirit of an aristocracy, will form for ever the models for the painter of the sublime in secular life.

On the other hand, the artist of a plutocratic society does not invest his heroes with this indivisible grandeur of character, but rather produces a scene splendid and striking as a whole, but composed of elements, no one of which has in it a nature that, standing alone, would awe us. Strip these plutocrats of their eastern dresses, their jewels, their flowing hair, their painted chambers, and their gorgeous retinue, and they would be like the most ordinary of mortals,—objects, perhaps, of pity and affection, but not of awe, wonder, or respect.

The painters of the sublime seek to represent noble existences; the painters of the beautiful, who minister to the tastes of the plutocracy, seek to please and dazzle by their general effect. Painting will, therefore, be with plutocracies a more favourite art than sculpture.

Perhaps some stern moralist*, judging but harshly, will say that this, which I have called the beautiful, and said to be the pursuit of plutocracies, is not the truly beautiful, but a degraded sensuous pandering to a passion which is salutary only when temperately gratified.†

They who plant their sympathies for ever in one of the early encampments of conservatism, and regard every further progress as so much degradation, will, like Camden, say that the open hospitality of the baron's bare brick hall was better than the "bravery of building" which succeeded it. Like Sallust, too, they will look back with delight on the days when the beautiful in art was unknown, and characterise a love of painting as a vice. I will not dispute with them. It is sufficient for a descriptive purpose to mark, that in the age of plutocracy this desire for what men call beautiful, and what they believe to be beautiful, and enjoy as beautiful, prevails or is manifested more than at any previous period of a nation's career.

There are thoughtful persons who say that the sublime is but a form of the beautiful. Out of respect for them I will put my proposition in a different shape. It shall stand thus. In the plutocratic age the kinds of beauty which are least sublime are cultivated and enjoyed for their own sake. In the aristocratic age the sublime, whether it be a form of beauty or not, is not cultivated for its own sake, but naturally arises out of the frame of society, and pervades the national life. The sin, therefore,—if sin it is,—of cultivating the beautiful for its own sake, belongs to later ages; but certainly, if a taste for architecture, painting, statuary, and the elegant refinements of life, is a private vice, yet, inasmuch as it elevates and adorns the nation at large, it is a public

* "Nothing is beautiful which is not good."—*Plato*.

† There is a virtue and a vice in the addiction to the beautiful: he would be a rash man who attempted to draw the line distinctly between them.

benefit.* And even in the progress of art, works which, like those of Perugino, we in these later times consider religious and spiritual, and anything but sensually beautiful, the conservatives of the age in which they were produced preached against as a sensual and depraved departure from the stern archaism of an earlier and more devout school.

The schools both of the democratic and the plutocratic nations, either take their subjects from the present life, with insinuated commendation of it; or, if they select other times and other places, are careful to afford no contrast derogatory to their contemporaries. The Roman and the Florentine, on the other hand, place before the ignoble present the lofty characters of an heroic past, or a divine and unknown world. Their pictures elevate by rebuking us. They speak of something better and loftier than the men and the things among whom we live, and they make us feel our own inferiority. This is of the essence of the sublime. But artists who take the liberty of rebuke will find no favour among a conceited people nursed in the belief that every more recent age is nearer to human perfection: a doctrine comfortable to those who can at once despise their ancestors, and disregard the neglect of their posterity.

By such reflections I would explain the fact, of which there can be historically no doubt, that in the plutocratic stage of society the mechanical arts of representation which minister to the pleasures of refined and cultivated minds are more practised and patronised than at any other period of a nation's career; while the subjects are less sublime, and the art itself is practised with the greatest splendour and gorgeousness. So in one sense the plutocratic age of a nation is its most splendid age. Now literature flourishes not under the patronage of a plutocracy, but under that of an aristocracy, for reasons

* Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, ii. 317.

which have been previously stated. In nations of slow development the two species of splendour, the literary and the artistic, succeed each other with marked distinction—the painters or sculptors of the sublime style being coeval with the greatest poets and thinkers, the painters of the gorgeous splendid style being a little later; but where the development is more rapid, they blend their beauty in a manner which invests their age with an undying fame so splendid that it dazzles the scrutinising observer.

But even when aristocracy and plutocracy co-exist in the same nation, and produce at once literature and arts, they do not blend their patronage. In France, from the age of Louis XIV., there was an aristocracy patronising and encouraging literature, there was also a plutocracy composed of the farmers-general and West India proprietors, profuse in their donations to all who tended to the refinement of human nature. The authors, though they sometimes took the plutocrat's money, never returned for it praise or even common civility, but recorded the apparently enduring want of sympathy between literature and a plutocracy, by their satire and raillery. The plutocrat's patronage was better bestowed on the artists, who, less favoured by the aristocrats, owned the financiers and their descendants, for example, les Marquises de Priè et de Pompadour, as their best patrons. For French civilisation in the age of Louis XIV. only wanted a difference in topography to make it in this respect like the Italian in the acme. Suppose that the literary men had lived under the patronage of the aristocracy in some separate province—some Rome or Florence, and suppose that the artists had lived under the patronage of the plutocracy in some other province, another Venice, and then the confusion arising from the fact that both sets of patrons and both sets of patronised lived in the same Paris, would be dissipated.

The republics of Italy in the middle ages presented

a result of the working of these great principles curiously splendid, instructive, and clear. In Florence there was an aristocracy and later a constitutional *ἀναρχία*, fostering first Dante and Petrarch, and afterwards Raffaele and Michael Angelo.* In Venice almost at the same time there was a plutocracy sheltering Titian, Tintoret, Paul Veronese, and Giorgione; and the other little states of Italy rivalled them in literature or the fine arts, according to the capacities of their social conditions. Thus not only were literature and art flourishing at the same time, but there were two distinct kinds of art in perfection at the same time. Under the influence of the noble and ecclesiastical patrons at Rome and Florence came forth grand and lofty representations of the Saviour and the Madonna, Holy Families, angels, and representations of persons and scenes fit subjects for sublime paintings by reason of their historical associations, or their connection with the Founder of Christianity. At the same time, and in the same Italy, sometimes even from the same hand, came the glowing landscape, the gorgeously-coloured portrait, the rich pageant, and all those subjects by which artists minister to the comparatively sensual tastes of a plutocracy. And these very Venetian artists, Tintorèt, Titian, Giorgione, lived in a nation not infidel nor Protestant, and among plutocrats whose origin, situation, and eastern tastes removed them further above the ordinary prosaic level of town life than any other race of plutocrats; so that their painters, though colouring and ostentation

* *Aristocratic and Theocratic Italy.*

Giotto, Florence . . .	died 1336
Leonardo da Vinci, Milan, Florence, & Rome	„ 1519
Michael Angelo, Rome	„ 1564
Raffaele, Rome . . .	„ 1520
Giulio Romano, Rome, Mantua	„ 1546
Correggio, Parma . . .	„ 1534

Plutocratic Italy.

The Bellinis, Venice, the last	died 1512
Giorgione, Venice . . .	„ 1511
Titian, Venice	„ 1576
Tintoret, Venice . . .	„ 1594
Paul Veronese, Venice and Verona	„ 1588

were their characteristics, could upon occasion be both religious and sublime.

The same phenomenon is displayed in Italian literature as in Italian art. In no other country have poetry and prose been simultaneously developed.* We know the long but glorious interval between the poetry of Homer and the prose of Xenophon. France first asserted the fitness of its language for prose in Pascal's Provincial Letters. Swift, Bolingbroke, and Addison developed the prose qualities of our own centuries after Chaucer and Shakspeare. Whereas almost one age saw Dante and Petrarch, who brought Italian poetry to its highest development, and Boccaccio, who did the same for Italian prose.

As animals inhaling pure oxygen live with greater intensity, while, if a certain quantity of inactive nitrogen is introduced, they live a longer though less energetic life: so in nations like Italy, the principle of life seems to work itself out with greater intensity, but with more brevity, than in the comparatively sluggish histories of Rome, of England, or even of France. However sad the shortness of Italian development, the splendour and glory of it were increased by its concentration.

In addition to the opposite schools of Rome and the Venetian artists, the one full of faith and severe sublimity, the other more sensuous and less believing, there was a third school in Italy, that of Correggio. Now, duly to appreciate the causes of Correggio's peculiarities, we have little else to do than to regard his political relations. He was of a small independent state, called Correggio, not far from Mantua. He worked there and at Parma, both of them places out of the great world in Italy; places neither exposed to the infidelity which had seized upon the most active minds of Rome, Florence, and Venice, nor taught the ways of luxury by a native town plutocracy. He was employed chiefly by convents and ecclesiastical potentates

* See Prescott, Misc., p. 463.

to decorate churches, to paint for places where men come to be taught that there is something better and higher than themselves. He may be supposed to have studied the great works of Michael Angelo, and Raffaëlle, and Leonardo da Vinci on the one side, and the Venetian school on the other. He lived at a time when, in those parts of Italy from which all faith had ebbed, the tide had begun to return, and the church which employed him was daily regaining its lost ground in the advanced states of Italy. Now, what was the combined effect of all these circumstances upon Correggio? His design is grand and vigorous, and he aims to represent beings more sublime than every-day mortals; in this he is like a Roman artist; but he colours gorgeously, he invests with rich hue and flowing drapery, he manages his lights and shadows cunningly like a Venetian, and even improved their art by a harmony of colouring peculiarly his own. His paintings were those of a believing man; but it was a less severe and self-condemning belief than that of the old Roman school. While he made the spectators of his canvas feel the sublime, though less intensely than the Roman and Florentine, he pleased their senses with the beautiful, though with a less degree of it than they derived from Titian, Tintoret, or Paul Veronese; and, like the painters of unbelief, he produced mythological scenes with exquisite grace and beauty, but, of course, no sincerity. Critics of art have long celebrated Correggio for blending the Roman and Venetian schools.* Do not the place and time of his birth and the nature of his patrons sufficiently explain how he came to be the painter of gorgeous plutocratic religion?

There is a country possessing a celebrated school of painters to which I have not yet alluded. Do the Spanish artists support or confute the positions laid down in this chapter? In no country was the influence of religion more strong, in no country was the early faith

* See Sir J. Reynolds's Works, iii. 180.

continued longer after cultivation and art had arisen ; and therefore we find that the flourishing period of religious painting in Spain lasted proportionately longer than among any other people ; indeed so long that there was scarce opportunity for the non-religious art to arise, for the influences which foster art declined almost at the same moment when the first decline in religious empire became perceptible. Much of the wealth which the merchants brought from the New World was spent in constructing — not city palaces — the most gorgeous ecclesiastical buildings which any country has ever possessed. The general character of Spanish painting is grave, religious, dark, such as mystifies and depresses the spectator rather than delights or ravishes him. Their paintings were for churches, not for saloons or banqueting halls. The Church exercised not merely a moral but even a decretal power over the painter, whom she forbade to deviate from the established type by which sacred personages were represented. The artist was not crushed by this, for he firmly believed in what he painted, and by that earnestness of belief produced upon his canvas much of the religious sublime. At last, when art became more imitative and less purely devotional, it yet took its subjects from the monastic population — the monks, and the beggars that lay at the cathedral porch. A plutocracy arose in Seville, formed of the merchants who traded with the golden colonies. In Seville arose a school of painters abandoning sublimity, taking nature for their subject, and revelling in gorgeous colouring, yet still acknowledging to some extent the sway of religion. This was the school of Murillo and Velasquez ; Murillo, whose colour rivals that of Titian ; Velasquez, who, disliking Raffaele, placed the Venetians upon the throne of his admiration. It came after that of Juan Sanchez de Castro and his scholars*, who painted in the hard, dry, heavy style of early devo-

* Life of Murillo, trans. by Davies, 1819, p. 16.

tional painting, so inexpressive of anything but superhumanity, that labels contained the words supposed to issue from the holy mouths. It came just before that of *La Feria**, whose paintings of blended brilliant colours but little drawing were scrambled up for lucre and exported to the Indies, there to adorn the homes of the Spanish-American plutocrats; a class of patrons, indeed, who while they almost produced the school of Seville, are said at last to have damaged Murillo's style by giving him orders for more paintings than he had time to execute well.† So long as there existed in Spain a school of respectable artists, they never gave way to the Renaissance style of Julio Romano. They never ceased to be religious by becoming mythological, poetic, or ideal. The current of artistic representation never triumphed over the current of devotional imagery, for the latter was in Spain continued so late that when it sunk the arts were sinking likewise. There was no such thing in Spanish artists as a feeling for the beautiful apart from the religious, for Velasquez, the head of the naturalist school, never succeeded in the ideal. Though the plutocracy of Spain assisted the Church in patronising art, and has imprinted its tastes upon Spanish art in its best period, they imported from the Low Countries the works of artists who, more free from religious thralldom, could abandon themselves with more freedom to the light tastes of a plutocracy; and under monarchs like Charles the Fifth, Philip the Second, and Philip the Fourth, the great painters of foreign schools, for example, Titian and Rubens, were patronised in the palace of Madrid, as Holbein and Vandyke were patronised in England. The Spaniards never cared for minute paintings or engravings, for they had little sympathy with mechanical and exact occupations.

* Life of Murillo, trans. by Davies, 1819, pp. 35, 36.

† Ford's Handbook of Spain, p. 263.

Thus then, out of the examination of national histories, where one social force alone works its way uninterrupted, or at the most modified by not more than one other force, comes the establishment of principles which may show or tend to show how to each social state a certain condition of art is by nature attached. I do not dare to embark on the enterprise of applying these principles to English art, for that were to launch into a sea of connoisseurship, where not only should I be no safe pilot, but where every knot we make would lead us further from the land it is ours to explore. But let these facts be remarked. It is only since England has seen rise within it a plutocratic element that we can be said to have had a school of painting.* As town life and plutocracy increase, the patronage of the fine arts increases. The cotton lords of Manchester, the woollen lords of Leeds, and the merchants of London and Liverpool, are the patrons for whose gratification has arisen a school of painting in this country ; a school which our aristocracy, like that of other countries, failed to evoke. We have no saintly, fervid, holy-figure-loving school, for we are a Protestant people, and shy of ceremonious religion. Our wisest painters do not affect the sublime of Michael Angelo and Raffaele, and therefore they are our wisest. The patronage for portraits increases, even though it has the rivalry of daguerreotypism. And large pompous gorgeous pictures, such as those which are now produced in goodly number in plutocratic France, are coming into favour here. But I am mistaken if English art will not make it its aim to reflect the excellencies of many types and many forms. Some will excel in devotion, others in the repose and grandeur of historical scenes, others delighting

* Before Gainsborough, our landscape artists were all dry mannerist imitators of the Italian schools, or hopeless daubists, and Gainsborough was a product of Bath, which in his day was the chief place in England where plutocratic fashionable town-life existed.

in plutocratic richness of colour, others in the democratic love of common homely scenes. How far they may be reconciled on one canvas, I leave to connoisseurs to determine ; but if our art as a whole is not a compromise and fusion of several schools, it is the only thing English which is not composite, and, in short, for that very reason would not deserve to be English.

CHAP. XX.

COSMOPOLITANISM.

THERE are many ways in which a subject like this might be handled by a ready essayist. Were he a metaphysician, he would seek deep in the recesses of the human heart for the sympathies which bind all men in a universal brotherhood. Were he a divine, he would insist on that Christian doctrine which bids all men consider themselves before God as distributable only into the classes of the sinless and the sinful, and teaches us that it will be immaterial to what tribe or nation of men belonged the creatures who tremble at the sound of the last trumpet. Were he a political economist, he would look upon the whole human race as a family bound to produce as much wealth as possible, and would regard all material distinctions and boundaries as foolish obstructions to the production of wealth. Were he a physiologist, he would assume every man to be a cosmopolite, and regard him as a subject on which the common laws of our nature operated, though haply modified upon occasion by the effect of climate, and the transmission of hereditary peculiarities ; but were he a statesman, he would, I apprehend, be deeply interested to observe how in the early stages of national progress the distinctions of tribes and country are strongly marked, how they become fainter at a more advanced period of civilisation, and how in very

advanced democracies men make a boast of despising the boundaries drawn by diplomatists, geographers, and linguists.

In the early ages, when nations are being founded, and before local affections and ties have arisen, the tribes wander from pasture to pasture with no other bond of union but that of common kindred. When they have settled, the idea of a nation is gradually formed, and the common defence of the neighbourhood adds an additional tie to that of kindred. At the period of the national acme, to these motives for union are added a feeling of pride in the greatness of one's country, an idea of common duty, and a patriotism which errs perhaps on the side of narrowness. But during the acme, two influences are at work, which eventually, if carried to their extreme, undermine patriotism; the one is the spirit of equality, the other the spirit of commerce.

Cosmopolitanism is in fact a logical deduction from the proposition of human equality. The theorists who abound in an age of active democracy found their speculations on the equality, not of their own citizens, but of mankind in general, and their ideal structures are supposed to be adapted to any number of men wherever they may dwell, and whatever may be their traditions. Nowhere has this grand but delusive thought been carried to such an excess as in the Constituent Assembly of the French Revolution. The men of that revolution, says the most eloquent of modern historians*, were not Frenchmen, but universal men. They were, and they felt themselves to be, better than priests, or aristocrats, or plebeians, or demagogues; they were "workers of God, called by Him to restore the social reason of humanity, and to lay down right and justice for all the universe. This declaration of the rights of men was the decalogue of the human race in all languages." Another great Frenchman has remarked

* Lamartine, *Hist. des Girondins*, liv. vii. § 1.

of the French writers of the present age, that these are never content with discovering truths or establishing propositions adapted merely to France, but must embrace the whole of mankind in their precepts and conclusions.*

Democratic theorists are therefore by force of nature cosmopolites, but in the same way as the principle of national equality admits qualification, it being for example held in some countries that all men with one modification of the pigment of the skin are equal freemen, and all men with another are equal slaves; so cosmopolitanism sometimes reconciles itself to national vanity (which is very different from patriotism), by the consideration that though all men are by nature equal, yet that superior energy and restlessness make the inhabitants of some states, united or otherwise, far ahead of the rest of the world. Were, however, the demolition of national distinction merely to rest upon theoretical argument, it would have little chance of disturbing the settled order of things in the national acme: a consideration more practical has more weight in such an age.

Few things impede commerce so much as frontiers, tariffs, and distinctions of national customs and laws. These in a non-commercial society are little regarded, for few people then cross the frontier of a foreign state except in arms, during an eclipse of all law; but the merchant is perpetually put to inconvenience and loss by arrangements which a believer in the equality of mankind cannot but regard as highly foolish and unreasonable. The intercourse between the inhabitants of different countries for the purposes of trade is seriously incommoded with the maintenance of local and peculiar customs, and expediency, if not reason, demands on every such occasion a similarity of usage.

Again, in societies where the acquisition of wealth has become the main object, and where it is not pursued as a

* De Tocqueville, *Dém. en Amérique*, iii. 24.

means to rise into an aristocracy or plutocracy, it is felt to be a matter of little moment in what territory or district it is acquired; and this feeling, joined with the restlessness of democracies, leads men to migrate from country to country, ever carrying with them a desire for universality of custom, nay even of weights, measures, languages, till at last they forget that there is any difference between the particular district in which they were "raised," as they term it, and any other where they may happen to settle. It is a feeling which, carried to excess, would lead to the easy enslavement of the territory whose natives have so little regard for it. It is, on the other hand, often a consequence of a restless discontent with the tyranny established in one's native country. The Greeks, so long as their national rivalries remained, were a free people; each state having its little centre of patriotism, and yet all of them ready to combine against a common foe: their loss of this feeling of common union and common duties synchronised with their fall before the Roman conquest, and their dispersion over Europe, when they became par excellence the cosmopolites of the ancient world.

The fall of Italy in the eighteenth century was likewise due, in part, to the previous eradication of patriotism. They had soldiers, they had riches, they had agriculture and manufactures, but they had no centre of patriotism.* Florence, Venice, Milan, and Padua, when they had fallen from their greatest eminence, felt for the first time some disposition to unite; but the same feeling which led them to overlook the claims of their civic patriotism, which merged the Florentine, the Venetian, and the Milanese into an Italian, soon merged the Italian into a cosmopolite, and put an end to the hope, once fondly entertained, that Italy might, by its own exertions, maintain its independence. It needed centuries of foreign oppression to arouse the torpid spirit of the Italians.

* "Patrie," Sismondi, Rep. Ital. xvi. 126.

Cosmopolitanism is, then, a growth of excessive equality and decaying local attachments. In the stage when plutocracy and democracy co-exist in equal proportions, it is checked by the solidity and settled feelings of a plutocracy which has made its wealth; but when the latter has become corrupt, or sunk before its more restless opponent, cosmopolitanism becomes a marked feature of the transition from the social stage which we have sketched in the last two chapters, to that which opens upon us in the next.

*Half of a page of Tocqueville is worth all this
chapter*

CHAP. XXI.

THE RISE OF DESPOTISM.

to do!

"Le malheur d'une république, c'est lorsqu'on a corrompu le peuple à prix d'argent; il devient de sang-froid, il s'affectionne à l'argent, mais il ne s'affectionne plus aux affaires; sans souci du gouvernement, et de ce qu'on y propose, il attend tranquillement son salaire."—MONTESQUIEU.

Point de noblesse, point de monarque mais une despote.

IF there is any truth in the leading position of this study, we ought to be able to discover in each phase of national progress the consequences of the past and the causes of the future. Abstract speculations upon monarchy, democracy, and aristocracy as independent ideas of the mind, each capable of separate treatment, have been censured, because too little regarding their relations of sequence; for in this the view of a statesman differs from that of a recluse theorist: the latter takes each separate form of government and condition of society as an independent whole, analyses it, and distinguishes its characteristics; the former is not content with this, but must know likewise when and how it arises.

Each of the leading characteristics which we portrayed in the description of the stage of co-existent democracy and plutocracy, is, in fact, a link between the stage there described and this which opens upon us now. Centralisation, functionarism, an exclusive attention to material

interests, and restlessness, are the qualities of the national character which are brought out and developed in the stage of mixed democracy and plutocracy, and every one of these is a quality necessary for the establishment of a firm despotism. To the demolition of all ancient distinctions, whether they be personal or local, the spirit of restlessness contributes by making the whole population migratory, and preventing therefore the permanent growth or maintenance of local differences and local attachments: the spirit of centralisation contributes by its hatred of all inequalities, except those which arise out of the orderly and even system of government where every functionary has his exactly appointed place, and is kept in perfect subservience by the hope of promotion and the fear of dismissal. To a despotism, restlessness contributes by its producing a very tedium of itself. There is a limit beyond which men cannot tolerate restlessness, and despotism is their only resource when that limit is reached.

The idea of a perfect despotism is that of a state in which all men are equal in political rights, and even in personal appliances. The only distinction allowed is that of holding office under the central government. The despot appoints every functionary, keeps a watchful control over him, and, like the spider, "lives along the line" of his subordinates; so that if the least portion, however insignificant, of the functionary system is disobeyed or thwarted, the central power is immediately aroused, resentful of offended majesty.

Two observations are therefore forced upon us: First, *That in proportion as a nation is centralised and equalised, it approaches towards a despotism*; and, Secondly, *That for any nation where the principles of centralisation and equality are firmly established, and whence all hereditary or local distinctions are banished, a wise and beneficent despotism is the true form of government.*

Thoughtful Frenchmen, when they reflect upon the various forms of government, may very possibly feel that

had they the power of living under the form of government which a philosophical comparison establishes to be best, they might prefer some other to that which is now established in France. Yet on the second reflection, that it is useless to choose a form of government unless the powers necessary for its successful working are present in the nation to which it is applied, they perceive that in France there are all the social requisites for a principate, and none of the social requisites for any other form of government. They have therefore no choice but to coincide in a principate, and to endeavour to make it as little oppressive as possible. Whatever ingenious webs metaphysical moralists may have spun upon this matter, the rule of submission by a wise and practical man consists, I apprehend, in one simple canon. It is his duty to submit to that form of government most adapted to the social order of the nation, and no other. If he wishes to change it, it is both wrong and useless to overthrow a government suited to the nation; he must alter, if he has the power, the social conditions. This can only be done by gradual and peaceable processes. Revolution avails only when the government and the social order are discordant.

Now if a Frenchman is discontent with his present government, what would he propose to substitute? A republic, or centreless centralisation, has been tried, and will always fail there, because equality is so completely established, that without fear, which cannot belong to civilians elected immediately by a fair popular election, there will be no principle of superiority which can exact obedience, for centralisation requires an unimpeachable centre of authority; and in addition to this cause of failure there is a corrupt swarm of republican politicians in France, who would, as soon as it was in their power, drive a trade in public offices, and soon bring again a republican government to the same fate which has always awaited it in France.

The only way to establish any other government but a military despotism, or a republic, is to remedy the system of equality. To restore an aristocracy is totally impossible. There remain only two other proposed methods for introducing inequalities. First, that of D'Argenson*, and afterwards of the Girondins, to decentralise the state, and transfer a great portion of the legislative and administrative functions to the provinces; in short, to make France like the United Provinces, or the United States. This suggestion the experiment of 1787 sufficiently refutes. Secondly, there is the suggestion of M. de Tocqueville† to substitute for the old aristocrats associations of men of influence and wealth. This is, in the first place, very difficult to be commenced, for no established government would favour it; and, in the next place, if commenced, it would require great public virtue in the members of these associations to prevent their being mere instruments of jobbery; and, in the third place, the whole system might be overthrown in a moment; for these associations have not the personal interest of the aristocrat to lead them to support this indivisibility. A prince can abolish all associations without inflicting personal injury. Each unit is sent back corporeally unhurt to his original insignificance; but the prince cannot dis sever an aristocrat or divide his wealth without measures more violent than the simple veto on associations; and besides, one man with a train of dependants, supported by his greatness, forms a far more formidable corporation than an association of equal units who can each subside into being private citizens without that personal ruin which would overtake the dismissed dependants of one aristocrat.

Reason and example coincide in leading to the conclusion, that a statesman cannot reconstruct inequalities, he can only preserve them; and when they are gone there is no alternative but equal freedom or equal servitude.

* Martin, *Hist. de France*, xvii. 603.

† *Dem. en Am.* iv. 325.

Despotisms result from plutocracies in two ways; either the executive branch of the plutocracy manages to become despotic, or the plutocracy, unable to control the classes poorer than themselves, or too corrupt to care any longer for the semblance of liberty, surrender their power into the hands of a prince, often a foreigner, on the tacit understanding that the old plutocracy will have the best offices under the new functionary system. The first results when a plutocracy vests the executive in a single person, who succeeds in breaking the limits imposed upon him. It is not a feat of easy accomplishment. Many of the doges of Venice, contemplating history with insufficient sagacity, perceived that the hereditary head of a feudal noblesse had often managed to become a powerful monarch; but omitted to observe that the secret of their aggrandisement was their making themselves the central head of the nation, and relieving all those who were oppressed by the little potentates; whereas in Venice there was a firm and centralised plutocracy, whose union would not have been dissolved by the absence of a doge. Twenty doges* were driven from their thrones, or massacred, in consequence of this mistake in drawing an historical parallel.

Louis-Philippe was the creature of that wreck of plutocracy which survived the revolution and the empire. The capitalists and richer citizens were his best friends. The lower democracy, the peasantry, and the army, had no affection for him. Their champion† might establish an empire, but the champion of the plutocracy would have much more difficulty in becoming absolute; and Louis-Philippe found it so.

The only instance of a plutocracy remaining long at

* Daru, *Hist. de Venise*, v. 540.

† Napoleon I. was most truly called, "the child and champion of democracy." At Carthage there was the same ambition, and the same jealousy. The House of Mago presented the best generals to the state, and therefore was the most jealously watched. Heeren, *Hist. Rep.* iv. 122.

the head of affairs is the Venetian. The old plutocrats who had obtained public office, despised the new plutocrats, and made the offices hereditary. At last enterprise ceased, and there were no new families to compete with the old ones. The democracy, long subdued, were poor and of mean spirit. The old plutocratic families remained throned in the pomp of their hereditary offices, like some ancient king who sits in his tomb for centuries wearing his imperial robes, till at the first rude blast that blows into the opened tomb, the king and all his ensigns of sovereignty fall down a handful of dust. So, in 1798, perished this grim Venetian phantom at the first touch of living power.

Venice thus affords no instance of a plutocracy dissolving into a native despotism; but presents the very contrary example of a plutocracy lasting in power through the stage of national life in which a stationary despotism usually reigns, till the nation was so utterly decayed as to become a fit subject for despotism by conquest.

Whoever speaks of the rise of despotism should be cautious of the moods of his verbs. If he uses the indicative mood he may, among a fair audience, pass for a narrator of history; but if he says the same thing in the imperative or the optative, he will share some of the fame of Machiavel. "The Prince" contains general advice to all persons who at any period of national progress, being subjects, desire to be sovereign, or, being sovereign, desire to extend their territory. The scope of this work, therefore, embraced such situations as that of a feudal baron desiring to make his family royal, or a monarch, like Alexander or the Russian Czars, aiming at universal empire, and bringing other countries under his rule. But he is most at home when he prepares his recipe for a private citizen to establish out of the stage of mixed plutocracy and democracy a despotism founded on functionarism. He had reason to be so, for he lived in Italy at a time when the plutocracies and democracies

of that country had become effete and weary of contention, and when despots were everywhere rising.

Machiavel's rules chiefly regard the personal conduct of the prince; for instance, he is enjoined to devote himself, both intellectually and bodily to military affairs, to exercise all necessary cruelty at his first elevation, but afterwards to be as mild and beneficent as circumstances will allow; to be liberal and profuse, according to certain rules; to avoid contempt and hatred, to eschew flatterers, and to know upon necessity how to be perfidious. Our task is to take the process a step earlier, and to show how, by centralisation, equality, corruption of character, and other causes herein described, an apt field is prepared for a pupil of Machiavel. Without a favourable combination of social relations it would be vain to attempt the establishment of a principate; when that combination is once formed, no one aspiring to a principate can act more wisely for himself, or perhaps, upon the whole, more for the interests of the state, than by acting upon the precepts of Machiavel. For I wish to put this distinction very clearly before the reader: An attempt to establish a principate without foreign interference, unless the conditions of society are suitable to that form of government, can only end in a signal failure, which all Machiavel's precepts are powerless to avert; but when society is ripe for a principate, and a prince becomes a political necessity, he cannot act upon the whole better for the safety of his own power, or the general good of the state, than by listening to the advice to exercise all necessary cruelty at first for the establishment of his power, but afterwards to be beneficent and just. Whatever may have been Machiavel's personal admiration of Cæsar Borgia, the prince who acts upon his precepts will not be a Cæsar Borgia, nor a Nero, nor a Caracalla, nor a Genghis Khan, but a Julius Cæsar, or a Napoleon III. There are few things in the history of our own times more striking than the remarkable manner in which the latter monarch,

whether accidentally or not, has acted up to the very letter as well as the spirit of "The Prince;" and by so doing he has provided for the French a government more suitable and beneficial to them than any they could have received from republican ideologists, or citizen kings.

It is the misfortune of his reputation, that the mention of Machiavel not unnaturally leads to some considerations on the depravity of the national character. Every one in reading his "Prince" perceives at once that he deals with nations from which the higher feelings of honour, liberty, respect for law, restraint of self-indulgences have been eradicated, and that his rules are framed not for the establishment of a principate in any country at random, but principally in one where a certain degree of public immorality has spread through the whole national character.

The progress of morality and the progress of what is called civilisation, are not the same. The former declines after the constitutional stage is passed, the latter often advances. So that in the progress of nations this stage of incipient despotism is not reached without a decadence of character; while it is sometimes more refined, educated, ingenious, and polite than any that has preceded it. The Rome of Tiberius and of Hadrian was a far more civilised, refined, and graceful capital than the Rome of Cicero and Cæsar. The Athens with which Philip was at war, resounding with the refined discussions of the Academy, resplendent with the works of Phidias and Apelles, was more cultivated and refined than the Athens which sent forth the victors of Marathon and those of Salamis. Italy in the days of Machiavel knew many more of the useful and elegant arts, and better loved the refined, the tasteful, and the beautiful than when Dante began to sing, or Raphael to paint; and the *savoir vivre* of the Frenchman has increased while his liberty has decayed, and the principate of the Napoleons been consolidated over the ruins of public virtue. Ame-

rica, which advances with rapid strides in the application of science to practice, and the successful opening of new sources of wealth, is said by its own citizens to deteriorate, not merely from the stern morality of the pilgrim fathers, but even from that less degree of probity and virtue which prevails in the countries whence new emigrants continue to arrive. When once every point of honour is laid aside, and nothing deemed disgraceful but what the laws punish, then civilisation may continue an uninterrupted advance, but it will advance only to materialise mankind, and elevate the useful and agreeable by banishing every troublesome virtue and every restraint on personal indulgence.

I believe the converse of the proposition to be equally true. No native despotism can hold its ground except either from the total ignorance of the greater part of the population that any other government is possible or proper, or from their firm conviction that there is not virtue enough in the public men to conduct republican or constitutional forms of government, and that they cannot furnish a new and better crop of statesmen. America will never subside before a despot while her public men maintain the honour and integrity of those who founded her constitution, and while the people have virtue enough themselves to exact it from their elected governors. If we trace the causes of the Roman decadence, do we not first single out the corruption of the Roman character? Do we not find the same cause in action in every Italian state of the middle ages *, before the despot, whether native or foreign, subdued it? Need we multiply instances by recalling the sad memoirs of Athens, of Spain, of Portugal?

That revolutions are the fault of the governors more than of the governed, is a proposition which has received the sanction of great authorities †, and whose truth in the

* See the speech of the Florentine citizen to the Signiory, in the beginning of the 3rd book of Machiavel's History.

† Mém. de Sully, tom. i. p. 133. Burke's Works, ii. 224.

majority of instances it would be impossible to deny. It is a condition of society sufficiently bad when the fault of the governors leads to a revolution; but it is a still worse condition when the fault of the governors and the governed combine in making that revolution lead only to despotism. The revolution which dethroned Charles I. was a revolution in main the fault of the governors, but it was the merit or the good fortune of the governed that they could eventually establish in the place of the overthrown monarch a better government. The French revolution of 1784 was the fault of the governors—if the feudal noblesse could still be said to govern; but it was the fault or the misfortune of the governed, that after half a century of experiments they have succeeded in establishing no firm or suitable government except a centralised absolutism.

When the material of moral renovation exists in the nation, the corruption of the governors may be remedied either by revolution or by constitutional means. If the second decemvirate of Rome was corrupt, it does not follow that the order of patricians from whom they were appointed was equally corrupt*; and accordingly from that order rose in later times more honourable rulers. The statesmen of our country have at certain periods been guilty of the grossest corruption, and yet constitutional monarchy has not been thereby seriously endangered, because the gentry and commons of the country were always capable of furnishing a more honest relay to supply the places of those whose corruption necessitated their removal. Our constitution will never be endangered by the corruption of our public men, so long as there is this reserve force of morality in the nation; but if the whole House of Commons were to become as corrupt as in former times some of its members were; if the electors were as corrupt as upon occasion the elected have been, then there could be left no hope of alleviation for the intolerable imposture of jobbing ministers but the iron rule of a despot. Our

* Niebuhr, *Hist. Rom.* ii. 341.

constitution will perish, not merely when the legislature shall be more corrupt than the executive, but when the character of the nation at large shall be more corrupt than that of the legislature and the executive.

The materialism and self-indulgence of a democracy, when the democratic is the sole and unchecked principle in a state, not merely spreads a wide demoralisation, but also affords to the aspiring prince a ready means of quieting his subjects. Machiavel* teaches him to entertain the people with feasts, public spectacles, and amusements of every description, to divert them and keep them in good humour; a line of policy practised by the Roman emperors towards the nobles of the capital, and by the Roman generals towards those nations whom they wished to subdue. They taught their rude enemies the want of civilised luxuries, and then supplied them with those luxuries at the price of liberty.†

Thus the characteristics of the more advanced stage of plutocracy and democracy lead to an absolute government. One of those characteristics, restlessness, is a means of introducing the peculiar form of absolute government which succeeds. Restlessness, on its first introduction into the national character, is very generally connected with commercial energy; but when commerce declines, the eagerness for novelty and action raises a furor for arms, and revives that popularity of war, which is generally detested where commerce is the chief national employment, unless it is war undertaken for commercial purposes. But when love of war does revive, its character is very different from the same passion in young nations. The one is the spirit of a warrior nation, inured to toil, patient of labour, ambitious of none but strenuous glory; the other, the passionate fury of a fighting democracy: in the one, war is the business of a

* The Prince, ch. xxi.

† "Ut homines dispersi ac rudes, eoque bello feroces, quiete et otio per voluptates assuecerent . . . idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars Servitutis esset."—*Tacitus in Vit. Agric.*

whole life ; it is the normal condition of the nobles ; and so long as each man does his duty and maintains his character in the camp and in the field, the actual amount of conquest is regarded with comparative indifference ; in the other, the citizens burn for immediate results, and, after a long peace, rush to arms with the same passion as they rush to any other novelty, and once in arms, they cannot brook delay ; in the one, those who are most eager for war go to battle themselves ; in the other, the fury for fighting and conquest burns most fiercely among the civic population, which remains at home, and measures out to unsuccessful generals the same remorseless condemnation as that with which they would fling away a tool, or a machine that had failed to produce the immediate result, whether possible or impossible, on which their impetuous desires are concentrated. The restless democracy, intent merely on the attainment of their object, are more ready to buy than to win victory ; and if their own rural districts cannot furnish troops for their purpose, they hire the hardier frames of foreign adventurers and soldiers of fortune. Of such were the armies which fought for the Grecian republics in the days of Demosthenes ; of such were the armies which earned Carthaginian gold, by ministering to the Carthaginian passion for conquest ; of such were the armies which, in the latter days of the empire, carried to the extremes of the known world a fear of the restless ambition of the mobs of the capital ; of such were the armies which the mercantile Florentines hired in the fifteenth century, as their fighting servants * ; of such were the armies which, with a considerable admixture of Frenchmen, in the name first of the republic and afterwards of Napoleon, aroused the fear and the revenge of the whole continent of Europe.

No passion burns in its turn more fiercely in the hearts of a restless democracy, no longer restrained by com-

* Machiavel, Ist. Flor. lib. i. fin.

merce to peaceful pursuits, than the love of military glory, albeit that that glory is won for them in distant countries and by foreign troops. The weaker the character of the individual, the greater his wish for extraordinary events and his fear of the consequences, and in no state of society are individual characters more weak than in extreme democracy. Such of their own citizens as go to the wars and return successful, return not as plain soldiers who have done their duty, but, by the popular adulation and vulgarity, which never calls things or persons by their right name, they are inflated into "heroes." Reduced as all men are to a social equality, the titles of military rank are sought after with immense avidity. They cannot eradicate a distinction of rank from the military system, and they cannot eradicate from the human heart a desire to rise, in however ignoble or paltry a manner, above the common level. In the great democracy of this age, which yet finds the chief gratification for its restlessness in commerce and in travelling, there prevails this passion for military rank, which, with many another indication, betokens that at some period, not perhaps far distant, America, like Carthage, Rome, and France, will burn with a passion for military distinction, acquired though it be by hireling champions and treacherous defenders. The frequent choice of a military man for the highest office in the state, is a circumstance not without significance.* The result of war, carried on after this fashion by a democracy, is generally a principate, a form of government which, to sum up the previous observations, naturally succeeds democracy and plutocracy, for some among the following reasons:—

Because centralisation has been established and acknowledged as the true principle; and centralisation wants a head.

* General Haurin in 1840; Zachary Taylor, 1848; Pierce in 1852 all chosen for their military exploits.

Because the government is taken out of the hands of unpaid independent grandees, who are the great enemies of a despot, and committed to paid functionaries, to whom the despot gives the alternative of serving or starving.

Because equality has diminished the respect for the governors, who now have no other claim to respect but their office.

Because restlessness leads to a love of military glory, and those who have achieved it are looked upon with as much respect and admiration as in such an age it is possible for one man to feel for another.

Because the military ardour evokes great commanders, and one of them making himself the acknowledged head of the army, seems to be a not inapt head for the civil centralisation.

Because restlessness at last produces a tedium of restlessness, and induces every one to coincide in a government which gives prospect of being strong and settled.

Because every faction that has been oppressed by stronger factions hopes for equal justice from a single ruler; and the members of small oppressed factions are collectively more numerous than the majority that on each several question by allegiance of some of the smaller factions oppresses the others.

Because in disunion, civil war, and tyranny of factions there is no real liberty, and a prince gives hope of securing a larger share of liberty to each individual.*

Because the national character is corrupted by jobbery,

* Gaultier, Duke of Athens, coming at the head of the forces of the King of Naples to assist the Florentines in their contest with the Pisans, took advantage of the internal broils in Florence, and harangued the people, saying "that it was so far from his design to take away their liberty, that he came on purpose to restore it; that citizens divided amongst themselves were slaves, whilst those who were united were really free; that if he should extinguish private ambition and intestine discord in Florence by his manner of governing, surely he might be said to re-establish their freedom, and not to deprive them of it."—*Machiavel, Hist. Flor.* bk. ii.

despotism, sycophancy of the electors, the habit of regarding politics as a trade*, and of struggling for infamous honours instead of true glory.†

Because universal licence has produced a complete disorganisation of civil government, and the organisation of military life, which is based upon centralisation, is the only organisation remaining in the state.

Because the exhausted plutocracy (if one exists) hopes to have the best offices under an autocrat, and is glad to have his assistance in expelling or at least silencing the sycophants of the populace, forgetful that, like the Soderini, the Strozzi, the Rodolfi of Florence, they will soon sink into the condition of unknown and servile functionaries; and even when a plutocracy are hostile to a prince, they make but a poor stand against him, if he is otherwise supported, for no order of men are so given to fear as those who have their property in the shape of money.‡

Because in the last stage of disorganisation the party of order desires quiet and security for property at any price, and the party of progress identifies itself with numbers and intelligence. The triumph of the latter produces a republican anarchy, from which the national reaction, accompanied by the influence of the party of order, leads to the only form of government that can secure order. Despotism is that only form of government; and despotism the friends of order support, as their only security, although before the anarchy they may have been monarchists, aristocrats, or constitutionalists. Anarchy, therefore, transforms its antagonists into the supporters of despotism.

* Οἱ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι προστάντες μετ' ὀνόματος ἑκάτεροι εὐπρεποῦς πλήθους τε ἰσονομίας πολιτικῆς καὶ ἀριστοκρατίας σώφρονος προτιμήσει, τὰ μὲν κοινὰ λόγῳ θεραπεύοντες ἄθλα ἐποιῶντο.—*Thucyd.* iii. 82.

† Montesquieu remarks pointedly, that after the plebeian knights became judges at Rome, there was no virtue, no police, no law, or magistrates.

‡ See Niebuhr, *Hist. Rom.* iv. 352.

Because, even if so disposed, the turbulent rabble have not strength or condensation enough to resist an incoming despot supported by the army, who make them fear for their condition in this world, and the priests, who make them fear for their condition in the next.

Because the tyranny of the opinion of the majority which admits no dissent, a tyranny like that established during the first French revolution, and which now prevails in America, implants in the minds of the people a sentiment of political fear; and fear is the principle of despotism. Thought is crushed by absolutism of any kind; by absolutism of democracy, as in America and France; by absolutism of plutocracy, as in Venice; and the operation of crushing thought has not therefore to be commenced but only continued by an incoming despot.

Because the nation under a plutocracy or democracy has been derided for its love of peace, and its sole addiction to commerce; and hopes in the military glory of its despot to recover its wounded vanity.

Because utility, the principle of democracies, leads to luxury, and luxury tends to its own augmentation, till at last material interests are the only interests regarded in such a society; and one who aspires to a principate seldom fails to express his devoted attachment to the material interests of those who are to elect or to accept him. He responds to their cry of *Panem et Circenses*, and they are satisfied. For the sagacious despot is one who, not content with professing, acts on the principle that the greatest sensual happiness of the greatest number is the true object of government. An autocrat has the power to overrule petty vested interests, which in free countries impede vast and uniform undertakings, for promoting material interests. In short, he can make straight roads.

Because an autocrat gratifies the love of novelty by making new laws and institutions; gratifies the love of equality, by assuming as the basis of these laws and

institutions, that all his subjects are equal, and excites admiration and fear by the grandeur, universality, and immobility* of his code.†

Because the nobility having perished, and the state being governed by a civic mercantile plutocracy, the generals as well as the troops are in the main sought from the class of neighbouring petty princes and soldiers of fortune ‡, tutelary geniuses, who, entering a state to defend, sometimes remain to govern.

These are some of the reasons that explain the sequence from democracy or plutocracy, or a combination of both, to a centralised despotism. There is probably no one nation in which they all operate together in producing the change; but the change, I venture to think, has never been produced without the operation of some two or more of them. And as plutocracy and democracy, when in fair conflict together, temper each other and check, in some measure, the faults to which they are separately liable; so when they meet in conflict with aristocracy and a constitutional monarchy, they not only are themselves much purged of their own faults, but they become useful in purging those other elements of theirs; yet the despotism into which they merge combines not the merits but the faults of each. The contest of the social elements is ended. Each is indulged; but he may not strive, he may not discuss.

And so the sun goes down upon the battle: class against class, element against element, theorist against theorist, all in one undistinguished mass, striving for the prize of

* Few things are more destructive of respect for a legislation than constant change of laws, for it betokens feebleness and want of foresight.

† Cf. the advice of Machiavel (*The Prince*, ch. xxvi.), and the practice of Napoleon.

‡ Machiavel, *Hist. Flor.* bk. i. fin. So Xanthippus, the Spartan, was chosen general by the democracy of Carthage, because the Punic generals were totally incapable to conduct an army. Niebuhr, *Hist. Rom.* iii. 589.

valour and of industry—all left in one blank night. The cries and the clangour of the combatants grow fainter, and soon cease to trouble the still darkness; and when the morn breaks, their standards are plucked down, their badges torn from their breasts, and their arms borne by the despot's soldiery. All are like one another, and no one can tell to which faction they had belonged, what hopes they cherished, what principles supported. No more turmoil of tongues, no more clash of steel, no more rough shouldering onward for truth or ambition's sake; all is still, save that I hear a slight clink as each man walks,—the clink of the chain upon his ankle.

baw, baw, baw!

CHAP. XXII.

NATIONS GOVERNED BY A DESPOT.

“ Quid vanæ sine moribus leges proficient ? ”

DOES it please you best, reader, to travel through an unequal country, now charming with sudden bursts of beautiful scenery, now wooing to stay by the homely happy air of its green valleys, now harassing you by rugged and dangerous passes, now detaining you almost hopelessly in pestilent morasses, to find yourself on one side of the hill in a garden of Eden, and on the other in a slough of despond ; or do you like better to roll along an equal plain where you are neither troubled with difficulties and dangers, nor diverted by the beauty of prospect or romance of adventure ; but where you pass mechanically on with undeviating precision from one equidistant station to another, surrounded with every scientific appliance for travelling, but without change, without incident, without anything to break monotony ? If the former, you will have sympathy with the vital principles of aristocracy ; if the latter, with those of a centralised despotism.

For the sake of brevity the word despotism is used in these pages as a synonym for a centralised aristocracy governed by the functionary system. If there is an offensive meaning usually attached to the use of the word despot, I beg to disclaim all intention of implying it here. As an Englishman, I would oppose the establishment of a

despotism in my own country ; but it is hardly consistent with the leading positions of this study, for Englishmen to consider themselves at liberty to speak offensively of governments in other countries where the government is suited to the social conditions.

- Whoever accustomed to live in a country in an early stage of development places himself in one arrived at that stage when despotism is the natural government, will mark with no measured astonishment the broad distinction between governors and governed. He will see in the former constant activity and interference, he will find a distinct class of men on whom by division of labour the whole function of governing has devolved, and he will observe them devoting to that duty all their life and energy. On the other hand, the governed have resigned every pretence to meddle in the administration of the state, and with their interference in government has departed likewise their social inequality. Comparing them with the populations of self-governed countries, he will be struck with their want of energy and spirit, their self-indulgence, their deadness to higher motives, and their great equality, not merely in rank, but in personal culture, tastes, and sentiments ; and he will be astonished to discover amid all this abandonment of liberty and self-action, an intelligence, a refinement, a fertility of mental resource, and a degree of general education far greater than that which is usually found among a population that itself participates in government.

Why this should be so, why attainments and accomplishments greater than those of earlier ages should be the possession of the subjects of despotisms is a question, which leads to, and perhaps may receive some sort of answer from the following reflections.

After the distinction of noble and serf is in the earliest ages established, the tendency of all national progress is to elevate the serf into a citizen, and to lower the noble to the same intermediate rank. Commerce is the means

of forming a citizen-class, which receives continual accessions from the country population, and is ever inroaching upon and lessening the power and prestige of the higher orders; for the former are classes who practise economy, the latter have more temptations to squander.* In the stage of mingled plutocracy and democracy, the old aristocracy is either entirely abolished or absorbed into the plutocracy, which for our present purpose may be taken to be a class of richer citizens. The citizen-class is then supreme in the state. It uses its supremacy in one of two ways. First, it takes the place of the old noblesse, and exercises over the rude uneducated country people, a sway often more galling than that of the nobles. This is generally the case where the citizen-class has incorporated into itself the old noblesse, who thus, while they give up their ancient prestige and come down to the level of citizens, yet retain their former contempt for the rude cultivators of their farms, and the breach is even widened by the town life adopted by the landlords, who, instead of living among and sympathising with those who cultivate their estates, have no communication with them except that of receiving rents. This was the case in many states of mediæval Italy, and affords, I believe, the true explanation of a phenomenon at first striking, —the great culture and equality of the townspeople in France and Tuscany, and the rude and primitive ignorance of the country peasants.†

The second way in which the citizen-class uses its newly-acquired power in reference to the country people, is to educate and make them in fact citizens. This will be done rather where the country is a manufacturing one, and the powerful citizens have need of a large supply of

* Mills, *Political Economy*, 3rd ed. i. 22.

† See on the relation between dominant citizens and the surrounding peasants in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, even in some measure in Spain, Sismondi, *Études sur les Constitutions des Peuples libres*, p. 107.

skilled workmen. They cannot afford to educate them after taking them into their service; but it is their interest, and they make themselves believe it is their duty to pay rates, and get other citizens to pay rates for educating the whole population of the country. In countries where the rural aristocracy, strong in the affections and fears of the country people, still remains in the same nation with a rich and energetic citizen-class, the latter, jealous of the power of the aristocracy, set about educating the country people, partly from good motives, but partly also with the view of dispelling from their minds their primitive respect for the quasi-feudal landlords. The latter, though they have a latent suspicion that this general education bodes their power no good, can hardly proclaim themselves sufficiently selfish and ungracious to deny their support to the new cause of educating the populace; and thus in the course of the stages which precede those we are at present describing, the education of every person, however humble, becomes in countries thus situated a marked concomitant of the increasing power of the citizens.

If the intercourse between the towns and the country is slight (as in many parts of Italy now), there is no very pressing necessity for the statesman to interfere in educating the country populace. It were, of course, the better if educated, but it will not deteriorate if uneducated. The case is altogether different with regard to the working inhabitants of towns, or the general population of a nation, where the towns are in constant communication and intercourse with the country people. To them—both townspeople and country people—education becomes necessary to prevent or to alleviate a degradation of character. For the great multiplication of the educated and refined classes has a most baneful influence on those below them, unless counteracted by some meliorating influences. Imagine a population of 1000 industrious persons with twenty gentlemen among

them. The 980 think none the worse of themselves, because they do not happen to be gentlemen ; but imagine that 500 out of the 1000 were gentlemen, nay, if you please, imagine only that in a society where the business of life requires constant reading and writing, 500 cannot read and write, and are dependent on the scornful aid of the other half, they soon at this rate become mean-spirited and driven out of heart. They are met at every turn with contumely and hauteur, not a day passes but they have a grating sense of ignorance and inferiority, till at last they carry about with them a feeling of perpetual shame and discontent, that rids them of self-dignity and drives them to revenge. " Our soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and with the despitefulness of the proud."

Education, with its equalising influences, steps in to alleviate this. The 500 labourers receive an education which, in common things, puts them on a level with the rest of the community, and likewise gives them the power of improving their condition still further ; and even if they remain in the condition to which they were born, they may solace themselves by thinking that wealth and fortune—things often enjoyed in an inverse proportion to merit—are all that is required to make them equal with the highest. They see their fellows always rising around them, they feel themselves capable of doing so, and that reconciles them to their lot.

Enter a rural village church in England, you will see the peasants in their clean frocks crowding in, on none the worse terms with themselves because a couple of pews are occupied by the well-dressed and educated members of the squire's and parson's family. Enter a parish church in a large town in England, you will see the gentlefolks and the well-to-do tradesmen, and the smart young clerks and milliners in goodly number ; but where are the artisans and labourers ? They either do not go out to a place of worship at all, for very shame of being seen among such

a crowd of well-dressed people in their shabby clothes, and with their uncouth gait; or they go to a dissenting chapel, or a Roman Catholic church in a poor neighbourhood, because they will meet none there but such as are in the same plight with themselves. Enter the cathedral at Antwerp or Milan, you will see the whole population of citizens, rich and poor, thinking nothing of the differences of station, education, or wealth, but all, except the beggars who practise their profession there, humbling themselves, with good grace and polished mien, before their common Creator. Do not set this down to a difference of religion, but to the fact that the citizens of towns in Belgium and Lombardy, as in France, have all some sprinkling of education, some measure of refinement, and that there is no broad and impassable line between those who work with their hands and those who do not.

I will not say that the country peasants, who know only two or three educated families, have no need of education, or could not be made happier by it; but, comparing them with the labouring population of the towns, it is impossible to doubt which has most need of the humanising and equalising tendencies of education. For the fact is, that in the scale of self-respecting individuals, the uneducated townsman is far inferior to the country peasant, and he needs culture to prevent him from yielding to those degrading influences to which he is so peculiarly exposed. Education is the corrective of that excessive subdivision into classes and ranks, which, originally introduced by an aristocratic conquest, and bearable enough so long as the distinction of noble and commoner is the only distinction, becomes intolerable when the population is minutely classified according to a graduated series of employments and habits; for, as each of these new divisions is introduced, it does not so much heighten those above it as lower those below it, and excite in them increased degrees of envy, despair, and self-abandonment. Take the instance of the Norwegians, to exemplify social

equality not produced by education, nor requiring education to maintain it, and seeming to be the natural state of persons who are all similarly employed, and of similar rank, habits, and dispositions, and where the only exalted men are the few venerable senators, commended by a long life passed in honour and usefulness to the suffrages of a people who, fit to be a law unto themselves, demand from their elected senators nothing but counsel and the simplest exercise of executive functions. Take, on the other hand, the instance of France, or of America, to show how education has been brought in as an alleviation against over-division and a ridiculous excess of classification, and how, in consequence, persons who, to an Englishman, would appear of incongruous stations, habits, and employments, meet together with mutual forbearance, equals on the common level of educated citizenship.

Even our own social improvements, whereon, in this century, we much pride ourselves, are palliatives applied, to remove the new evils introduced by the division of labour and the increase of the towns. The agricultural peasant, before he became a mere day labourer, though he did not know how to read or write, had an infinity of knowledge on natural subjects, about the seasons and crops, and mode of culture of the earth, and the habits of animals and birds, which, even if sometimes erroneous, and often obscured by superstition, kept his mind employed and prevented his being a mere machine; but the migratory navy, who can do nothing but turn up earth; the factory man, who knows only how to make one portion of a pin, is in a state of gross and hopeless ignorance, and requires to be taught the only kind of knowledge he can learn in cities—paper-knowledge. So it is with our boasted sanitary reforms; our model lodging-houses, our infirmaries, our hospitals, our public nurseries were not wanted when the farm labourers all lived in the farm-house, as they do now in parts of Scotland and Australia, and were taken care of there when ill, or when they had sub-

stantial huts, which the peasant's wife kept clean, because she loved cleanliness for its own sake. It was only when emigration from the country into the towns took place, and the workmen were huddled together into whatever dens and cellars they could pay for, and the women obliged to quit their homes all day and work in the factory, that this change took place, and our social reforms, which we parade with so much fuss, became necessary. It was not till there swarmed in our streets a population who did not know that wheat grew, that popular education, cheap tracts, mechanics' institutes, and rustic excursions were necessary matters of philanthropic patronage.

When the stage of appropriate despotism by other causes arrives, it thus finds one of two social phenomena. Either all the citizens are cultivated to a high degree of general civilisation, and in consequence equalised, so that on their holidays one can hardly tell the gentleman from the artisan, as in Florence, Milan, Brussels, and, to a great degree, Paris, while the country people around are poor, ignorant, and heavily taxed by the towns; or the whole population is endowed with the usual characteristics of educated citizens, as throughout the greater part of Prussia, and of the United States of America.

No one can regret this extended book and art-learning, except for the opportunity it gives to despotism to implant itself firmly on a country. A sparse, homely population, whose lore is in its ballads and its old-wives'-tales, are the most difficult of all to be acted upon or changed. They have no need of the learning that you proffer them, for the traditions and wise saws of their ancestors suffice for their guidance in a life which differs in no essential particulars from the life of those who went before them. They listen only to the ballads that they like, and you cannot get them to attend to what they do not like. To subdue their minds effectually one must, like Gray's Ruthless King, put all their bards to death. When, on the contrary, you have a cultivated population, in the habit of always sending their

children to school, and relying on the schoolmaster or the circulating library for all their knowledge and ideas,—a population, too, which, by its artistic occupations, requires continually fresh instruction at a pace proportionate to the progress of scientific discoveries,—then nothing needs further to be done but for the central power to appoint all the schoolmasters, to license all the books, and despotism is enthroned not merely on the bodies, but on the minds of the people.

This is why every free Englishman recoils involuntarily from the state-education of Prussia, of France, of China, and though he may find the average Prussian, or the average Chinaman, or the average Italian a far more cultivated, ingenious, versatile, inventive man than the average Englishman, he dreads and hates those state-systems of the Continent, which, adapting the military organisation to the mental culture, establish all over the country government barracks for training the national mind. And taught by the saddest lessons of history, he sees the error of statesmen who, like Quesnay* and Turgot, believed that national education was a preventive of despotism. It is not. The intellect of despotism is one of its main supports.

Each promising youth who leaves the state establishment, with a mind developed in the tracks laid down for him by the central despotism, when he feels within him a power of being something better than the cultivator of the paternal patch of land, or the chief manipulator in the paternal smithy, looks about into society for a worthy object of ambition. He is told that at certain periods of the year severe examinations are held by the officers of the central government, that all citizens alike are allowed to enter into that competition, and that those who succeed in it pass from the governed into the governors, and may rise by well-earned gradations to all but the highest

* Quesnay said, "Le despotisme est impossible si la nation est éclairée."

posts in the state. One thing only is required, implicit obedience to the central head, obedience to all who by the system of the state, may be higher in the functionary scale, and a total abnegation of independent action. Is it wonderful that thus the whole ambition of the community is directed to public office? Is it wonderful that to meet this ambition, and to spread still wider the influence of government, the central power extends to the utmost taxpaying limits the number of public functionaries? Is it wonderful that each educated youth, well trained in the mind-barrack and animated by the hope of rising in a settled gradation, subsides into his place with perfect ease and with a subordination of mind and body not excelled by the most perfect military discipline? This is the reason why the functionary despotic system obtains in the stage of equal civilisation such excellent materials to work with. How is it that it finds in the social condition of the nation subject matter so well suited to its operation?

First, there are no independent country gentlemen. All the work performed in a constitutional country by lords-lieutenant, sheriffs, justices of the peace, country police, juries, and the whole parochial body, is committed in France and other centralised countries to the prefects and their subordinates, each prefect being directly responsible, and receiving his whole inspiration from the central minister. Secondly, for the reasons mentioned in this and the last chapter, the great bulk of the population have abandoned even the wish to govern themselves. Thirdly, the state education has produced a substantial equality, not only in rank but in intellectual accomplishments, among the populace, who therefore own no eminence or distinction but such as follow wealth and governmental rank; and the school learning of the state teachers, while it has taught them many accomplishments has carefully outrooted plain common-sense, and independent action. Fourthly, a more active and inquisitive system

of government than could be easily formed by a self-governing people in its best days is rendered necessary by the minute complexity of society.

A peasant population which either lives upon the full produce of their own lands, or cultivating another person's, after deducting what suffices for their existence, pays him the surplus in kind, have little need of the minute interference of government. A few simple rules of civil and criminal law, and a few fiscal regulations, suffice for the ordering of such a population. When wants and the arts of ministering to wants increase, new regulations continually require to be framed by the power in the state which is able to enforce them. Population increases, towns grow, a large class of people cease to cultivate the ground, and not having rents to live upon, turn to handicrafts and other more subtle ways of gaining their daily bread. When every man is his own butcher, baker, boot-maker, clothier, lawyer, ballad-singer, or keeps one of each craft on his own private establishment, no laws or government inspectors are required to regulate his dealings with himself in his different capacities, or with the members of his family and household who assist him in them, but as labour becomes infinitely divided and society is split into an infinity of trades and professions, a new nerve of government is ever permeating into some new fissure.* Thus in highly artificial societies, such as many of those now on the Continent, a fresh opening for a new functionary is continually occurring, and is as continually filled with avidity by the central government. Whether it be in the inspection of factories, an employment ever

* The government of Paris anxious to outroot the influence of the provincial powers, decreed, with a ridiculous minuteness, the terms upon which artisans should hire themselves out, and the mode in which they should manufacture certain articles; and to enforce these, not only the regular intendants were in state of constant activity, but general inspectors of industry pervaded the country for that purpose. De Tocq. L'Anc. Rég. p. 62.

increasing as manufactures increase; whether it be in the administration of the roads of gravel or of iron, means in the hands of despots of making the central power felt to the last league of their territory; whether it be in licensing the press, which in countries of artificial culture is almost the only way of communicating with effect any new thought or feeling; whether it be in the ever increasing litigation of provincial districts, populous with peasant proprietors, who find provided for the settlement of their quarrels not an independent, hereditary local potentate, but an emissary of the central minister, prepared to adjudicate by no local custom or usages, but by some Code Napoléon; whether it be in restraining the increasing wiles of men who, driven from their last device, are ever inventing some fresh and unprohibited doctrine of ill-doing; whether it be in the increased duties of police, and the necessity of an organised central body who should meet the profession of thieves in their increased science, with devices as ingenious, as well concerted as their own; whether it be in providing shows and food for an impatient and idle populace, wrought up to a state of morbid sensibility; whether it be in wresting from private hands and making part of the governmental duty the education of the people and the management of the charities of the empire, so that to the government the outcast, the maimed, the superannuated should look for the only helping hand, the only hospitable roof*; all these things and many more akin to them demand of government, or at least admit it to exercise in the later stages of society, a degree of activity, a minuteness and constancy of interference which could hardly be provided if government were not the sole duty of a special class. On comparing these different effects of simplicity

* "Tous les membres de tous les bureaux de bienfaisance de la France entière sont nommés et révoqués par les préfets." — *Montalembert, L'Avenir pol. de l'Angl.* p. 258.

and complexity of life, we cannot help being struck with the great foresight of the ancient legislators, who consulted their own ease as well as their country's good, when they inculcated public morality and frugality ; for a simple honest population with few wants and few business transactions with their neighbours is the easiest of any to govern, provided the form of government can be reconciled with their ideas of liberty and self-action.

When, therefore, the stage of appropriate despotism has arrived, the constant intermeddling of the government (an intermeddling to which all despots, whether appropriate or not, are prone) in matters even of extreme minuteness, is not without some reasonable pretence ; nor can such an enormous change in the frame and scheme of government fail to have striking effects upon the character of those who are its subjects.

The English traveller in France, in Belgium, in Prussia, in Austria, even in Denmark, is struck by an amazing difference between these countries and his own. There government pretends to do everything for the people, nothing by the people. Here each section, each isolated class of the people, fights its own battle, manages its own cause, administers its own rules, and strikes in for as much power in the general state as the conflicting interests of other classes will allow to it. These nations of the Continent wait, like good children, upon the fostering care of their "paternal" government. They see—the Prussians and the French in particular—a constant anxiety on the part of this government to encourage whatever tends to their pleasure and gratification. Are they pleased with the fine arts ? are they fond of learning ? do they like music and operas, and the thunder of military bands ?—all these are anxiously provided for them by their paternal government. Famine is ever kept from them ; disease and its preventions are the especial care of the government. They have but to intimate a new craving, and if it can be responded to their government responds. One

thing only is required of them, not to interfere with the government that is so careful of them, not to take upon themselves any part of its functions, nor, if they are unable to see the beneficence of every measure, to suspect ill of the intentions of those who generally manifest so much considerate kindness. What is the result? The Prussian is one of the most refined, civilised, educated, and æsthetic of mankind; he is also the most abject and the most servile. The Frenchman, who has not yet been so long habituated to a paternal government, is daily learning to look with more and more confidence to its foresight and sagacity, and to doubt the utility of controlling it. The Belgian and the Chinaman, like the Roman of the later empire, and the Greek of the Byzantine, resign everything to their governments, and at last contract by degrees, almost insensible, a habit of implicit reliance, and an incapacity of taking upon themselves any of those arrangements which their ancestors were wont to manage each for himself. So far does this extend, that in their very merrymakings, which one would have thought peculiarly a subject of self-action, the nations under the active rule of despots, leave all the arrangements to their governments, and dance, and flirt, and sing with a policeman at each elbow to regulate the steps and the cadences. This, too, is the more appropriate among a people where theatres and concerts, and governmental pageants, confer even more pleasure than amusements in which the populace itself takes part. Compare the rude merrymakings of the Norwegians, the Tyrolese, the Spanish peasants remote from Madrid, and the English in rural districts, with the Circensian games of the Roman empire, the arena at Constantinople, the operas and the concerts of the Milanese, the Florentines, the Venetians, and the French. The former must be left altogether to the people themselves, because it is their pleasure to take part in them, and their revelry is the overflowing of the joy of their hearts. The latter shows can be performed by men to

whom the division of labour commits this as the business and work of their lives, and who are appointed and paid by the government, because all that is done by the refined and languid civic populations at their festivities is to sit in a box, and listen or stare at the entertainment provided to stimulate their torpid passions, to arouse the feeble element of mirth that is within them, and to debauch their minds with a species of intellectual sottishness. Alone, among the chief amusements of Italian towns, the carnival admits some self-action by the people, trifling and ridiculous though it may be, and it is curious to mark, as the show passes beneath your balcony in the Corso, that the characters, whether real or feigned, which figure most in the carnival, are peasants dressed and acting after the merrymaking fashion of the Tyrolese or the Spaniards.

Thus the public affairs of government become the private business of the functionaries, and the private affairs of each individual become the public care of the functionaries; for functionaries are plain spoken and open, and write clear edicts when they are regulating the individual's private affairs; they are reserved and silent, and resort to secret despatches only when they are administering public affairs. In short, from whatever point we survey it, the confirmed government of a despotism, in its intercourse with its subjects, forces upon us, accustomed to the freedom of constitutional nations, a comparison with the relation between an indulgent keeper and a person not *sui juris*.

The power of a consolidated despotism resides not in the despot, but in the despotic system. No crowned head is so insecure as a central emperor, who found functionarism established before he came to the throne. Sovereigns who establish functionarism are more safe, because they choose for their officers those who are marked by fidelity to their persons. But their successors are not so happily situated, for the latter have attained their throne, if not by the act, at least by the forbearance

of the body of functionaries ; and they must reign with its peace or not all. It is not the emperor, it is the Prætorian guard, civil as well as military, which rules. An ambitious functionary aims to rise to the highest place in the system. He has only to conciliate the affection of his fellows, to alienate them from the wearer of the crown, and then, by simply assassinating him, the ambition of the new man, and his clique among the Prætorians, may be gratified. Constitutional monarchs are occasionally assassinated by personal enemies, and by madmen, but not by persons who aspire to the throne, unless they also aspire to change a constitutional monarchy into a despotism ; for if constitutional monarchy remains, the only effect of the assassination is to accelerate the accession of the pre-ascertained heir. In countries where there is no constitutional place for the Opposition round the throne, the Opposition sits in the saloons of expectant empire, which, gradually taking the lead in thought, and acquiring the supreme power over the opinions of men, need nothing further to attain the splendour of actual sovereignty but to be dyed with the blood of one more assassinated ruler.

The power of the functionary body, in the continental despotisms, has been aptly compared by Mr. Laing* to the power of the Roman Catholic clergy of the middle ages. The two institutions bear many points of similarity. They are open to any one who has sufficient personal merit and education. They require from their members great subordination, and, individually, an implicit obedience to the established theories ; but the members collectively have all the power in their hands, and can erect or depose their head, or change the form and title, though not the essence of their government, at the pleasure of the strongest party among them.

The functionary body in Germany is supplied from the

* Notes of a Traveller, p. 74.

students of the universities. From the moment of their taking degrees, nay, rather, from their entry as undergraduates, they leave the governed, and become members of the governing class. Out of them come the newspaper editors, the literary men, the professors, the ministers of state, and the heads of police. They live under different laws, and are subject to different tribunals from the rest of the people*, and in them really lies all political power. A closet-bred professor, deep in theories of government, perhaps starts an idea that a constitutional government is better than a despotic one. It spreads through the whole functionary class; the leading-article writers descant upon it; the students, much bemused with beer, sing muddled songs in its praise; the patriots of all ages think that they are about to make an epoch in the world's history. The king or reigning duke is made to understand that the will of the functionary class requires a constitutional government. The despicable potentate, to assuage the cry, makes a diet, fills it with functionaries, pays them twenty-five francs a day each for being the enlightened representatives of free and independent electors; and beyond the receipt of the money, and a great generation of rhodomontade, all goes on the same as before.

It is often supposed that functionarism is an invention of modern despotism, but erroneously. The great despotism of antiquity was introduced and supported by functionarism. One of the characteristics of a functionary government is the amazing amount of writing, which always strikes an Englishman as one of the great points of contrast between the foreign government and his own, and astonishes the minds of the simple peasants who, in the East and Russia, have the deplorable misfortune of being the subjects of bureaucratic functionarism. This writing system is a result of the individual weakness

* Cayley, *European Revolutions*, 1848, ii. 13, *sqq.*

It precedes
the text.

which characterises these governments. Authority and responsibility reside not in a few great men, each of whom takes upon himself the whole burden of an achievement, but in a mob of signing and countersigning, examining and registering officials of almost equal impotence. The system is strong; the individuals who work it are weak.

In the early ages of ancient Rome, the guild of notaries, to which no freeborn Roman belonged, was employed to record the public transactions, register the ordinances of the senate, and perform the writing duties connected with the finances. While the Romans were still of simple habits, and under an aristocratic government, this guild was of no more importance in the state than the clerks of the Treasury are now in England. "But," says Niebuhr*, "this guild, feeling itself to be an indispensable instrument of the government, and increasing in importance and wealth, as the state extended, and as partly the government and partly the financial companies which had existed long before, wanted a constantly increasing number of book-keepers and clerks, laid claim towards the end of the republic, when wealth in moveable property constituted a second and really more powerful nobility, to form a third estate as a collective body of officials; and this claim was in reality granted to it. In the days of Appius the Blind, it had not yet raised itself so high; it was not yet separated from the other libertini; it was, consequently, without doubt, the most important mediator of the common claims, and the more so as Cn. Flavius stood at its head, who was undoubtedly one of the most distinguished men of his age. So long as the Roman empire existed, the notaries, with only the change of their name, remained a powerful corporation, although the official class became developed, and was separated from them."

After this separation, the functionary class became the

* H. R. iii. 299.

really ruling body in the state, and was the stronger because it consisted not merely of the bureaucrats, but also, in consequence of the constant warfare and subjugation of provinces, of an enormous military force, which was constituted on the functionary principle.

CHAP. XXIII.

THEOCRACY IN ITS RELATION WITH PLUTOCRACY AND
DESPOTISM.

"Quand on regarde de près, on aperçoit que ce qui a fait long-temps prospérer les gouvernements absolus c'est la religion et non la crainte."—DE TOCQUEVILLE.

THE functionary system under a despot is composed of civil and military officers, who undertake the whole work of secular government. It may, or it may not, include the ecclesiastical. Why, and how it includes them, are inquiries which deserve a thoughtful consideration, and to meet them properly, we must take up from Chapter XIV. the thread of our narrative of the relation of the ecclesiastical to the secular powers.

We broke it off at the epoch when either an anarchy of religious systems, or of thought, or of both, is established in a nation. Let us first take the case of nations where equality of all religious systems, or the general tolerance of them by the established system, allows every man to worship as it pleases him.

A change from this state of active personal religion, of great vitality in private life, however little obtrusive in public life, is brought about in the following method. The material prosperity of a nation, when that is the only object of statesmen, the only care of the population, leads naturally to an indifference about the minutiae of religion; not so directly to an active or rampant infidelity, as to a carelessness about the truth, and a desire to throw the

whole responsibility upon the religious ministers. The religion of the tradesman who suffers his business to take too great possession of his mind "walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion."* What is this but the division of labour applied to a new field? Every man has need of some ventilation of his religious feelings as he has of the due provision for his pabulating, and the due shelter of his cutaneous organs. In the earlier and simpler stages of society, when fear and childlike wonder predominate, men listen to priests with true "religious awe," and allow them a real and substantive power over their minds, too often abused; in an over-refined and polished aristocracy, religion is tolerated as useful for the lower classes; in a trading democracy, each man feels that he has a necessity occasionally for some pious exercises, and therefore employs a class of men who make it their business to conduct these exercises skilfully. As a man resorts to doctors to be healed, lawyers to get him justice, hosiers to clothe him, butchers to feed him, so the division of labour tells him that all his religion may be done for him by priests. As they are useful, he tolerates, without believing, all their pretensions about apostolical succession, a call to holy orders, or the other devices by which a profession is raised into a hierarchy. This state of mind, when it is spread through a nation, leads naturally to an increase of the breadth of the division between laity and priesthood, a division light and unsubstantial in staunch Protestant countries, where every man is animated by an earnest faith, and offers up his prayers from the spontaneous fervour of his heart, and employs the minister not as his intercessor or his substitute, but rather as the leader and director of his devotions.

But when once it has taken firm possession of men's minds, that it is their "interest" to be religious; when a

* Milton.

large historical inquiry convinces them of the fact, that nations have always declined when they become irreligious ; when their own experience and that of other ages confirms them in the opinion that among individuals he who is most religious, most regardful of his Maker, has presumptively the better right to be considered honest and trustworthy ; when they find their domestic peace more secure by the religion of their wives, their ease more advanced by the religion of their children ; when for these reasons, or any of them, religion receives the sanction of the nation and its rulers, that nation is no longer religious in the true sense of the term. It has most of the faults of infidelity, without the merit of its bold love of free inquiry. And yet, if testimony on other points irreproachable is to be believed on this, the religion of the United States of America scarcely results from anything but sordid calculations of the most profitable policy. "It is reason," says De Tocqueville*, "not the heart, that conducts the Americans to their altars."

If this is a result of excessive freedom and license in religion, what does it itself lead to ? The answer is easy. If they worship from no fervour or strong convictions, if they believe one religion will do as well as another, then in the war among the ministers of the sects, it is easy for one sect which has obtained a slight mastery to perform the fabulous feat of swallowing its enemy, and present itself in the state with double its original strength. Thus is a population which is habituated to indifference about small matters in religion, and to an easy way of thinking that one will do as well as another, prepared for a great monopolising system.

The infidel nation, or one where thought is free amid an external political bigotry that drives every thinking man into infidelity, likewise prepares itself for the same end. Any piety which existed in Italy at the close of the fifteenth

* Dém. en Amérique, iii. 254.

century was to be found only among the women.* In the middle of the eleventh century, the mind of that infidel country had succumbed to the most absolute dominion in belief which has ever been exercised. Lord Macaulay † has eloquently said, "It is not strange that wise men, weary of investigation, tormented with uncertainty, longing to believe something, and yet seeing objections to everything, should submit themselves absolutely to teachers who, with firm and undoubting faith, lay claim to a supernatural commission. Thus we frequently see inquisitive and restless spirits take refuge from their own scepticism in the bosom of a church which pretends to infallibility, and after questioning the existence of a Deity, bring themselves to worship a wafer." This natural meeting between the extreme of total belief and total disbelief, which may so often be traced in the mental development of sceptics, is equally marked in the development of the mind of nations. Generally speaking, an infidel has much more chance of becoming a Roman Catholic than a Protestant has ; and so infidel nations which have rudely rejected all religion will rush into Romanism with less hesitation than a nation which, in order to do so, would have a religion of its own to resign.

For infidelity, or a multitude of struggling sects, when their wars are too keen or their religious profligacy too flagrant, have the same effect in religious matters that anarchy has in politics, the effect of impressing upon every thoughtful man the necessity of order. To the infidelity established by the writings of the French wits of the latter half of the eighteenth century, combined with the miserable spectacle of the *bon-vivant* Abbé, *un peu athée*, and the retention by the priests of their feudal privileges as barons, has gradually succeeded a settled religion ; not perhaps a religion of great depth or sincerity, but one not

* McCrie, Reformation in Italy, p. 187.

† Macaulay, History of England, iv. 28.

likely to be overthrown, for men seem convinced that, like their government, it suits them better than any substitute. It is a firm despotism in religion. For reasons elsewhere explained, it is the true form of worship for a sensuous, luxurious people.

After these methods, varying according to the circumstances of the community, the governed are in this stage of society predisposed to an absolute form of religious belief, which, while it is intolerant of opposition, is not troublesome to those who acquiesce in it. What part does the government take?

"*Jungamus dextras, gladium gladio copulemus*" has been the overture made on more than one momentous occasion by the ministers of peace to an absolute monarch, nor made in vain. Napoleon said that the Papacy was worth 50,000 men to him, and in that saying he expressed the feeling of every despot who can manage to make the crosier stand beside his sceptre, and confirmed the wise advice of Machiavelli* to princes, to found their government upon religion. Duty and interest combine to make a despotism enforce religion upon its subjects. It is the manifest duty of paternal governments to stop the usual deterioration and the unhappiness that never fail to follow infidelity both among individuals and nations, and to teach in their state schools some form, however erroneous, of religious belief.† It is perhaps not in the power of the state always to make an unbelieving nation believe, but belief is much more subject to external influences than is commonly supposed. We feel before we think, we often feel before we believe, though it gratifies our self-love to imagine that our thought and our belief are pure creations of our untutored mind. Again, equality is established in the nation, at least equality among all the

* Discors. ch. xii.

† On the effect of infidelity in producing perjury and demoralising ancient Greece, see Coleridge, *Friend*, iii. 122.

educated citizen classes ; if the government can once set the fashion of believing or professing to believe among this class, the whole will follow from the then irresistible impulse of avoiding eccentricity. Perhaps the first generation will be but conforming infidels ; but the second, taught to believe from their infancy, will do so in good earnest. And thus to transform a disbelieving into a believing nation is a task far from hopeless.*

But beside being the duty it is the interest of government to establish this element of tranquillity and order. It is its interest to enlarge the class of functionaries by including in it the class of religious ministers ; and this is seldom difficult when there are no haughty and independent classes from whom the priesthood can be drawn, and where the same system of examination that admits any citizen to the civil government may be applied to admit him equally to the ministry of the religious despotism.

In fact in this stage the position of the ecclesiastical body depends entirely upon the fact whether it is or not taken out of the governed and into the government, and overtures made by the government to admit them are not likely to meet with refusal or indifference. The priest thus becomes more a servant of the emperor than a servant of God ; and in fact in such a society it is all one whether a man preaches the gospel or collects the taxes. He is nothing but a functionary dependent on the head of the state. The Church is the stipendiary of the civil power. Those who need an example of this relation between the monarch and the priests, may remember how, on the accession of Napoleon the Third, the doctrine once connected with the Tory party in England, now given up by them and consigned to oblivion or ridicule in this country, was

* The reader of Locke is familiar with his admirable *exposé* of the ease with which new principles obtain implicit credence in the human mind. Essay on the Human Understanding, bk. 1, ch. iii, § 21 *sqq.*

revived in full force by the state priests of France, who, with the most fulsome and blasphemous adulations, proclaimed the elected of the people emperor by "Divine right;" and those who wish to see its effects after a prolonged period of working may contemplate the history of Spain and Spanish America.

The consequence of this intimate relation between civil functionarism and ecclesiastical functionarism is that the religion of despotism is a state religion, not in the sense of a creed authorised and established by the elected legislators of a free nation, because it was the creed which the greater part of the population believed, but after the fashion of the ordinary edicts of those governors who prescribe paternally what is good for those under their pupilage. One of the worst examples of this was afforded by the Roman empire, where "the various modes of worship were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful."* And the statesmen of the later empire, yielding to the cosmopolitan character of the age, as they added every new polytheistic† tribe and race to the Roman citizenship, admitted their gods into the Pantheon, and made it the centre of the religions of the world, thus openly establishing and supporting creeds which they did not profess to believe. Something of the same policy has been pursued by the English rulers of India.

But with this exception, statesmen of nations in modern times, which have arrived at the despotic age of their existence, have generally been relieved from the necessity of so flagrant an indecency by the universality of the Christian religion, and the only difficulty has been to choose the form which they should establish, when too often they had no belief of their own to guide them. One system has

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. ii.

† The Egyptian and Jewish religions were occasionally persecuted, because their deities could not make themselves social with the deities of the rest of the Roman empire.

generally been preferred upon such occasions, and not without good political reasons. A form of religion in which the division between priest and layman, or the governing and governed in ecclesiastical matters is most broadly drawn, coincides best with social systems in which the civil distinction of governing and governed is marked with the same broad line. Religions which relieve the layman from the greater part of the trouble of religious duties and impose it upon the priests,—religions which strive more to insure the happiness and amusement of mankind on earth than their welfare hereafter,—religions which are not exacting and ascetic,—suit a population devoted either to ease and material gratifications, or to business divided into minute tracks, each of which engrosses the whole mind of the artisan. Consequently, a religion like the Roman Catholic accords with the social conditions of an absolute despotism better than any other form of religion*, and these considerations explain their frequent alliance.

According to some witnesses †, there is now in America a craving for one universal and comprehensive religion which shall put an end to the troublesome and disastrous war of sects, and the disgraceful means they take to attract a crowd of worshippers. Such a feeling is the natural result of the too great license of sectarianism, for in the same way as out of political anarchy and license rises a desire for one strong government to insure tranquillity and order, so an anarchy of creeds, when abused, produces a tedium of sectarian quarrels, which finds its only refuge in one comprehensive and intolerant religion. The time for Roman Catholicism in America is not yet come, nor will it, so long as the Whig Federalists, who are naturally Protestant, retain a considerable portion of their power. But Catholicism has two supporters in the United States :

* Confer, however, the relation of the Protestant Church with the kingdom of Prussia, and mark the Minister of Public Worship at Berlin.

† Maurice, Kingdom of Christ, 2nd ed. i. 208.

the incipient plutocracy (for ceremonial religions always suit plutocracies* as much as Calvinism suits poorer citizens), and the despotic centralisation, which will certainly establish itself in America when all public virtue has departed from their statesmen. The Roman Catholics in America at the present day are among the most urgent for the establishment of perfect equality; and equality is the common foundation of their own religious system and of centralised despotisms. When a centralised and despotic system of religion is imposed upon a lively and thoughtful race, hitherto habituated to a multitude of creeds and no very strong devotion to any one of them, it is long before they quietly subside in orthodoxy. This was shown in the Greek Church of the Constantinopolitan empire. The heresies which sprung from the East (and scarcely any arose in the West, then in the stage of primitive theocracy), were caused by the active minds of the Greeks, then fond of novelty and thought. Four centuries have worked a change. We hear now of no more heresies in the East. The dissent and the thought are in the West. The great boldness of the Venetian merchants who joined the crusades in their dealings with the Pope and his legates, excited the astonishment and almost distrust of the French knights, who were accustomed in all things to yield to their theocracy; and this is one among the many curious contrasts that nations in such different stages of existence as were in the twelfth century Venice on the one hand, and France and Germany on the other, present.† So the Venetians liked ceremonial piety. “Why are the Vene-

* It is worthy of note that Puseyitism, the most ceremonial form of Protestantism, thrives most among the rich idle classes of England, who have no country estates or duties, but live almost entirely at watering-places. Nowhere is it more rife than in Belgravia, which these plutocrats haunt in the season, because the old noblesse is there to be met; unless it is in Brighton, a favourite abode of those who have wealth without duties.

† Michaud, *Hist. des Croisades*, iii. 124.

tians Roman Catholics? Because the state likes the religion. All the world knows they care not threepence for the Pope."* The plutocratic Anti-Orange party in Holland were in like manner the most opposed to the doctrines of Calvin.

* Selden, Table Talk, tit. Religion.

CHAP. XXIV.

INAPPROPRIATE DESPOTISM.

SCARCE anything is more common at the present day than to hear mooted on the platform and in the saloon the startling questions, Can Hungary, Poland, Spain, be free? The answer is usually prompted rather by generous hope than cool reflection.

Now I apprehend that in order to settle that point in every instance with scientific precision (an achievement I certainly do not undertake here), the proper method to be pursued is of this kind. First, to recall the general rule that all forms of government have certain social conditions with which they harmonise, and that where these conditions and the appropriate form of government meet in the same nation, that government will naturally endure so long as the conditions remain; and next, to remember that each form of government is liable to be misplaced, for constitutional monarchy is not the only government which vanity or dishonesty have imposed upon nations unfitted to receive it, though the incongruity is, in that case, more apparent and striking, because, without a nobility and a free commonalty constitutional monarchy cannot work, whereas other governments, such, for instance, as a centralised despotism, may retain a firm sway for centuries over populations fitted for better rulers and a higher destiny.

Despotism may be imposed upon nations unfitted for it. The discussion in Chapter XXII. was an attempt to fix the characteristics which mark the stage when despotism becomes the natural, if not the necessary government. If we desire to ascertain, in respect of any particular nation, whether despotism is natural or necessary to it, we have only to observe the characteristics of that nation and the characteristics of despotism, and in proportion as they are incongruous and dissimilar is despotism unfitted for that nation.

Despotism is naturally the government of a late stage of society, it suits the characteristics of that late stage, and, for reasons before stated, it succeeds in the course of nature to plutocracy and democracy. But *despotism may be found misapplied to nearly every stage of social development.* There are many instances in which this system of complicated minuteness and watchfulness has been imposed upon a people whose life is simple, whose character is honest. If we wish to find an example of the earliest and simplest state of society, where a shepherd population, scarcely settled upon the land, lives in primitive simplicity without wants, without the knowledge of, or the desire for luxury; if we wish to see set over a people whose wealth is in their herds and their strong arms, and who carry in the ornaments of their own or their wives' persons all the precious metals they possess, a class of ingenious functionaries prepared to patent a new invention in the steam-engine, or an improved polish for their French leather boots, or a stronger lavender dye for their kid gloves, with an education which has made them fit to report upon designs for sewers and to establish gas companies, to regulate the tendency of newspaper articles and to license the drama,—if this is our wish, we shall be gratified by a tour through the outlying districts of the Turkish empire, where despatch-writing functionaries, brought up at Constantinople, rule the amazed tribesmen

with a minuteness of interference which would be ridiculous if it were not depraved.

A population more advanced, settled as agriculturists, possessing some few towns, honest, simple, allied by blood with the nation which has of all shown most capacity for self-government, yet by a defect in its political development now lingers on under a centralised functionarism. I speak of the Swedes, a people who live in their loved homesteads a life of healthy, merry industry, and with flaxen locks, blue eyes, and ruddy complexion, would bear no mark of distinction from our own countrymen in our best country districts were their tongue but differently trained. They live under functionarism, but, except in the capital, it oppresses them not, because their manners are simple and inartificial, and give but little opportunity for the functionaries to interfere, though there is such a goodly number of them that the supply of their administrative labour far exceeds the demand.

How functionarism came upon the land of Sweden is easy to be explained. Gustavus III. destroyed the constitutional power of the nobles, and their own corruption has, by impoverishing them, destroyed their individual power, and converted them all into courtiers and functionaries; and while in the villages of Sweden one could not know whether there were functionarism or not, the life in Stockholm is redolent of it;—uniforms meet one at every turn, the population of the capital is always hunting after orders and titles, for office is the only distinction, and that which keeps the son of the noble in dignified poverty gratifies the ambition of the son of the tradesman. There is no question that could an independent and honourable aristocracy be established, or reinstated, in Sweden, that country would, at this day, take its place alongside of the England of the last Henrys and Elizabeth; and though to reproduce an aristocracy, when once it has degenerated into a functionary class, is, I believe,

impossible, Sweden may yet advance to the stages of town-life and plutocracy without any hindrance from its despotism. The growth of Gottenburg and the increase of its manufactures, give token of some progress in the usual course of national development; but the character and poverty of the Swedish nobles, if my information is correct, forbid any hope of a constitutional monarchy; and the present state, therefore, of Sweden is that of a country in the simple agricultural stage, ruled by a centralised functionarism.

Not dissimilar is the condition of the other Scandinavian kingdom. The Danes in the seventeenth century annihilated the independence of their noblesse, and that for ever destroyed their chance of a true constitutional monarchy. Their political difficulties at the present moment arise from the impossibility of framing a constitutional monarchy (for which they are otherwise well fitted) without an independent aristocracy. The despotism which had succeeded by the overthrow of the nobility, while the commons were yet agricultural and without towns, must either stop or allow progress. But what progress can there be? Clearly only this—to allow towns to grow and plutocracy to become a new power, for a constitutional monarchy can never be formed.

Nations more advanced, where the affairs of life are more complicated, and where there is no independent nobility, are more apt subjects for despotic functionarism. Prussia, and so much of the rest of Germany as follows the Prussian type, have since the days of Frederick the Great been ruled by a despotism ever increasing in the minuteness and activity of its interventions, and none the less potent because disguised by the imposture of paper constitutions. This system is much more appropriate in Prussia than in Sweden and Denmark, because the existence of the old commercial towns of mediæval Germany left a large civic population, to whom the government

by functionarism was most appropriate ; because, also, the policy originated by Frederick and his father has been to encourage commerce and the growth of towns, thus affording a more apt field for functionary government ; because, lastly, a refinement and complexity of social relations has spread through Germany, and become characteristic of Prussian life, at the same time that independence and self-action have been eradicated from it. Thus not only is functionarism appropriate by reason of the absence of powerful nobility, but appropriate also because the social conditions which require it have been studiously and continuously introduced into German life.

A government which when established was inappropriate, may become appropriate by the change in the civilisation of the people ; and Frederick the Great's policy was aimed not only at making a class of functionaries, but at making the nation suited to their government. He succeeded in the first, those who have followed him have succeeded in the last.

But nothing in such a functionarism as the Prussian prevents the nation extending its commerce and obtaining a powerful plutocracy. The great German commercial league, founded with the sanction and assistance of the German potentates, has already raised a large manufacturing class, and many wealthy families, who can afford to live in greater grandeur than the income of the high offices of the state can provide.* Thus they are steadily proceeding from that stage of their existence which we have called the constitutional—but which in them could never be truly constitutional, because of the defect of their aristocracy—to the stage when democracy and plutocracy are combined. This progress escapes us at the first glance, for over it is spread the great upas-tree of despotic functionarism, which poisons and stunts, and in the end must destroy this development.

* Laing, *German Catholic Church*, p. 189, *sqq.*

Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, even if they shake off despotism, can never hope for a true constitutional monarchy and a full development of the course of national progress, for their noblesse is destroyed ; but they may by a gradual, though partial development, arrive at the second stage of the national acme, when plutocracy and democracy are the sole and equally-balanced secular elements of society.

Let us now turn to a population which

“ Stands at the door of life, and doubts to clothe the year.”

I know no single spectacle in the history of the present age more striking, or one which should more interest statesmen who hope that they may be scientific without ceasing to be practical, than the spectacle now afforded by the population that dwells in the principalities of the Danube. There is a present with two possible futures—a class of haughty, honourable nobles, from whom the prince is elected, rules a peaceful population of intelligent but enslaved peasants. What is this but the England of the eleventh century? That commonalty may rise by commerce and by towns till it curb the strength of the noblesse; that prince, now elective, may become an hereditary monarch, and then what have we but the England of Elizabeth? This were one future. Who will not pray that it may be realised?

But those of the commons who have managed to get together some little wealth, do not live like the sturdy citizens in their mediæval towns, strong in their numbers and their industry, and the favour of their sovereign, but buy a quasi-nobility which exempts them from taxes and leaves them dependent on office for half their support. If this state of things continues, if the prince, like Frederick, surrounds himself with these willing functionaries, whose character, I am informed, is no better than that of their fraternity in Prussia and Sweden, if he manages to destroy the power and wealth of the nobility, then the future of these princi-

palities is the present state of Prussia and of Sweden. But the opportunity of being something greater is in their hands. All that is wanted to save them from such a stunted growth is to make the commons commercial, and to outroot this element of functionarism. If it grows up now, their development will be arrested and imperfect; if this parasite is removed, I know nothing that should prevent their career from being as high and glorious as any in history.

Hungary, with Transylvania and Croatia, clearly ranks in the class of nations to which despotism is inappropriate. There are three classes in that country, the Magyars, about 5,000,000 persons, who are descendants of the ancient Huns, and compose the nobles and gentry of the country; the Slavonians, about 6,000,000 persons; and the Roumans or Wallachs, about 3,000,000, who are descendants of the Dacian colonies of Trajan, and inhabit the eastern portion of the country. The Magyars came in as a conquering aristocracy, in the ninth century, under Aspad. They established an elective monarchy, though, as is frequent in such cases, the crown remained in the same family till it died out, in the fourteenth century. Ferdinand I. of Austria was then elected king of Hungary, and his successors have ever since succeeded to the throne, not as despots, but as constitutional kings. Hungary was till lately never merged into the Austrian empire, but has preserved its own laws and its own constitution; and the emperor obtained allegiance, not as emperor, but as constitutional king of Hungary. The constitutional checks came, as in all other aristocratic monarchies, from the aristocrats — the Magyars alone. The Slavonian and Rouman population had no voice in the government. The Magyars are many of them poor, but all inspired with a keen sense of honour, and the pride which never dies out of unconquered races. They are fond of war, fierce in their passions, full of patriotism; but not more addicted to steady and plodding industry than other

warrior aristocracies. The system of government is local and decentralised. The spirit of decentralisation is deeply rooted in the Hungarian people. The upper class of nobles is fond of a court life, but the second class of nobility forms the squirearchy of Hungary. They live upon their estates during most of the year, and are fond of field sports. They, as well as the poorer Magyars, are brave, hospitable, but, like our own squirearchy in former days, hard-drinking and unruly. The highest and courtly class generally belongs to the Latin Church; the second and third class of nobles are usually Protestant, either Calvinist or Lutheran. The peasantry, who belong to the subject races, are not mere serfs, but hold their land by villein tenure of the lord of the manor, and are secured in the possession of it very much like our copyholder. They are agricultural, and without trade or commerce.*

Now, this sketch discloses to us a country in a state very much like that of England in the earlier days of the Tudors†; Hungary being, in fact, a very fair type of the stage of national existence next succeeding the settlement of a warrior aristocracy. It is clear that the proper government for such a country is an aristocratic monarchy, till the commons become commercial and able to compete in the national councils with the nobility and the monarch. And it is equally clear that the attempt of the monarch, who happens also to be Emperor of Austria, to introduce functionary despotism into Hungary, is completely and stupidly wrong. The revolution of 1848 was caused by this Austrian policy; and

* See Cayley's *European Revolutions in 1848*.

† Bishop Heber wrote from Hungary in 1806: "There are few countries where an Englishman could obtain so much important information as in Hungary, the constitution of the government of which is a complete comment on the ancient principles of our own, as low down as Edward III."

though the Austrians were, thanks to the Russian army, victorious in the struggle, it will take many centuries of undisturbed functionary despotism to make it appropriate to that country.

How unhappy is the fortune of oppressed and dissevered Poland! The calamities of the Poles are brought upon them by the fraud and infamy of their neighbours. The despotic functionarism which rules them now is the most alien of all governments to the character of the Poles. They deserve to be trusted; but despotisms are founded on the belief that its subjects cannot be trusted, and, unhappily for poor human nature, this assumption, sometimes unjust at the beginning, in the end justifies itself, for men who are told authoritatively that they are rascals and villains are too prone to prove it. At the time of their subsidence under a foreign yoke, Poland, like Hungary, was in that stage of national career when a monarchical aristocracy rules over an agricultural population. With some slight differences, unimportant to our present purpose, it was like England in the days of King John, like France in the days of Francis I. Now, an invasion by a more warlike race, which settled in the land, would merely have deposed the old aristocracy and founded a new one; but an invasion by an absolute monarch, or a clique of absolute monarchs, who dwell in another country, has a totally different effect. It checks all progress, no towns or trade grow up under that foreign influence, and the people remain precisely as they were, except that their taxes are greater, and the money which their own nobles would spend among them is taken away as tribute to a foreign land.

For a time this condition lasts without any serious moral deterioration of the people; but commerce and towns can hardly arise under such a system, and if the autocrat adopts the Roman practice and Machiavelli's precept, he will soften and enervate his subjects by spreading his "humanitas" among them, till at last they

become, like his own native subjects, the polished and powerless creatures of a military despotism, not trusted because unfit to be trusted. The strong and turbulent he will draft off for his army, the rest he will equalise, humanise, and thus subjugate.

If Poland and Hungary can recover their liberty before their Russian, Austrian, and Prussian masters have "civilised" them, there is no circumstance of which I am aware that would prevent their taking their place as distinguished members of some new generation of nations. They would start whence France and England started in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and might attain by their own efforts as high a pitch of self-constructed civilisation as we have attained, and that is the only civilisation that does not immediately, and by a direct action, degrade a people.

Such submissions as those of Poland and Hungary entail no disgrace on the vanquished. They are the simple and inevitable conquests by the stronger over the weaker. There is no resemblance in Poland and Hungary to nations which, having tried to be governed by an aristocratic, or a democratic, or plutocratic government, have been obliged to exchange these for a despotism by reason of the corruptness of the persons in office. A despotism so introduced can never be permanently removed,—the persons may be changed, but the system remains; but the despotisms that now brood over Hungary and Poland might at any time be shaken off finally and for ever when the strength of the vanquished has increased, or that of the autocrats has diminished,—a consummation most devoutly to be wished by every Englishman, not merely for the sake of the subjugated people, but for the sake of human progress, which needs some new and vigorous nations to carry it on to further triumphs than those which it has yet achieved. The hand of France is enfeebled; that of Prussia, never strong, grows more infirm. There is I know not what of

unhappiness ever marring the fortunes of Italy. Spain is stagnant, with how little hope of a useful future ; and the true progress of our species is left to be carried on alone by England, who may worthily help to raise up coadjutors without fearing to find them rivals.

CHAP. XXV.

THE PREMATURE APPROACH OF APPROPRIATE DESPOTISM.

"Sed stupet hic vitio, et fibris increvit opimum
Pingue : caret culpa : nescit quid perdat, et alto
Demersus summa rursus non bullit in unda."—**PERSIUS.**

THAT a centralised despotism, like any other government, may be imposed inappropriately at any period of a nation's career, was the thesis which the last chapter assumed to illustrate. That *a centralised despotism may become appropriate to a nation at any period in its career*, is the thesis which this chapter aspires to establish.

This government, in the development of nations, resembles decay in the development of organic nature. Nothing succeeds to it except inanition. Decay or death may come upon a being at any period of its existence. In cases of full and complete development decay comes only after a long series of phases have been traversed ; but it may come, and it often does, in the very first stage of being.

Now, if we take each separate phase (except the penultimate) of the development that has been traced out, and suppose that that phase, instead of leading to what has been described as next in natural succession, leads to centralised despotism, this supposition, so far from being against history, actually gives the clue to the arrested

development of nearly every nation whose affairs are recorded in history.

Observe centralisation increasing under the tutelage of the early monarchical element. The first purpose of a monarchy is to establish a centre for the combined action of the whole nation. If this central government is composed of an order of independent nobles with territorial and local sympathies, or is composed of the representatives of localities, then the necessary work of legislative centralisation can proceed, without also creating administrative centralisation. This was the case in English history. Up to the time of the Reformation our Statute Book is full of laws regulating the minute actions and rights of the population, including therein the nobles who legislated. Their "restrictions upon selfishness," as they have been aptly termed*, proceeded upon the basis that every one who possessed property was bound so to use it as to consult best the interests of the state. The public interest, as interpreted by these local potentates in assembly, was always paramount to a conflicting private interest; but the decision of what was the public interest was arrived at by comparing and well-weighing the conflicting private interests, and striking out a compromise as the result. In that compromise every private interest was, to some extent, regarded; but, so far as it was not regarded, it conflicted with the public interest, and was bound to bow to it.

A fallacy lurks in this neighbourhood which it may be as well to start from its lair and hunt down at once. "That is the best government in which all private interests yield to the public interest.† In a centralised functionarism all private interests do so; therefore a centralised functionarism is the best government." The error lies in not considering of what the true public interest is composed. It

* Froude, *Hist. of England*, i. 11.

† See Aristotle, *Pol. lib. iii. c. iv.*

is, in fact, composed of the aggregate of portions of every private interest. Now, in a free constitutional government every private interest boldly and openly asserts itself, and is, to a certain limited extent, recognised and protected by the general result, called the public interest. In a functionarism a separate class of persons, pretending to have no interests of their own, take upon themselves to enact what the public interest shall be. Private interests are not openly heard; they must proceed, if at all, by intrigue or secret menace. The real interest administered is that of the functionaries, who advance and keep themselves at the public expense, and only recognise or shelter other private interests when, for the prolongation of their own tenure of office, it becomes necessary to silence a body clamorous against the official interpretation of the "public interest." That all men should yield to the state is beautiful in theory, but is good in practice only when "the state" is the aggregate of legitimate private interests administered by honest persons.

So long as the persons who take upon themselves to decide what the state requires are composed of elements of strong local and personal independence, this rigorous assertion of the public interest does not tend to too great centralisation; though in feudal times the public interest, as opposed to private interest, is generally the interest of the sovereign, as opposed to that of the nobles. In fact, the strong assertion of the public interest by the central monarch is, during the times of feudality, absolutely necessary to the unity of the nation. Thus Richelieu, observing the prosperity of the Spaniards and the disorder of French affairs at the beginning of his ministry, wholly attributes the prosperity of Spain to the preference of the public good to private interest in Spain, while the opposite obtained in France*; which means that the independence and turbulence of the nobles in France continually thwarted the

* Test. Polit. du Cardinal Richelieu, c. iii. p. 2.

public and general measures proposed by the crown, while in Spain the nobles had become courtiers. When the French noblesse, mainly through the policy of that minister, became central, then every assertion of state necessity, as opposed to private interest, was an assertion of centralisation in the rigid sense of the term. In proportion as the noblesse lost their power and local sympathies at court, the centralisation of France became more fixed and established. And it is manifest that in countries where the monarch is in contention with the nobles, he has a most specious argument in favour of the justice of his contentions drawn from this quiver of the "public interest." The nobles plainly and without disguise support their own privileges; they may legislate in all other respects for the public good, but that private interest of theirs is never overlooked. Not so the monarch; he can plausibly say that the public good is his only object, and he will thus draw round him all those who suffer from the privileges of the noblesse. This was the secret of the court influence in the provinces. The intendant came fresh from Paris into a province for no other purpose but to administer the public good, to regulate industry, markets, and all the petty details of district management; he was a formidable rival in influence to the seigneur, who claimed respect and taxes without pretending to return an equivalent of good administration. Frederick the Great handled this matter dexterously in his code. He proclaimed the good of the State and its inhabitants to be the true end of social laws, which ought to limit the rights and freedom of the citizens only as far as was necessary to contribute to the general utility. He never put forward the royal power as anything distinct from the right of the state. He thus assumed to himself the right to interpret how far general utility required the limitation of the freedom of the citizens.

So far as the aristocracy are concerned, centralisation is for ever established when they have allowed the court and its functionaries to decide what is the public interest.

But under a régime so constituted, the commons often continue to rise by trade to wealth and importance. They ill brook the surrender of their private interests to state necessity, as interpreted by a central body in which they have no place. As the government makes itself continually more felt, a larger number of persons desire to participate in it. The first result is the attempt to throw off the central head and establish a republic, for a constitutional monarchy is impossible when the aristocracy is destroyed. But a republic, except in a very small state, like Athens or Venice, cannot be a centralised body; and therefore the ultimate result of the rigid centralisation produced by the decay of the aristocracy before the commons have arisen to power, is a return of centralisation, no more to be disputed with even temporary success. This is how imperial despotism and its concomitants may arise out of the too great strength of the early feudal monarch, and may become suitable to the nation because all the necessary machinery for constitutional government has been destroyed.

Take a stage later, when there are two strong powers, the patrician and the plebeian, contending with equal vigour. The patricians, so long as they are true to their interests, oppose any centralisation except that formed by the assembly of the independent and divided powers of the state. The plebeians can only hope to make head against these potentates by establishing a rigid centralisation. As soon as the plebeians triumph, as in Rome, in Florence, centralisation is in power, and if they can not merely eject the patricians from power but outroot their personal influence, imperial despotism is the appropriate government.

No state of society exhibits greater variety than the state which may be described as marked by incipient despotism, because functionary despotism may come upon a nation in any stage of its existence, and therefore one finds some despotisms where the people are agricultural

and simple, as in Sweden and Denmark, or are individually free and little troubled by the government, and full of local sympathies, invasion upon which they would resent, as in Spain ; while in others, as in Paris, Venice, and parts of Belgium, the people are thoroughly civic, and, like most citizens, turbulent and difficult to be ruled.

It is true that after many ages despotism impresses its character upon a nation, and assimilates all those who are subject to it, whatever may have been the stage of their national progress when despotism supervened ; but this process of assimilation is often a slow one, more especially if the state of society when despotism first came was an early one.

Spain takes its place among nations of bad growth, for it has arrived at the stage of functionary despotism, a government apparently becoming day by day more appropriate to it, without passing through fairly or fully several of the preliminary stages of national progress. But its history has no exact parallel elsewhere, for the varieties of arrested developments are necessarily almost without limit.

The early Gothic aristocracy of Spain was in one sense a military aristocracy ; the *rico-ombria* signified originally an elevation of rank dependent on bravery. The *ricos hombres* were originally the chief champions of the nation, just as aristocracy meant etymologically, in Greek, the rule of the bravest. The Spanish word at last came to mean rich men, as the Greek word came to mean men of elevated rank, however attained. The Spanish was never a true aristocracy, for it was imposed by no conquest or quasi-conquest. Neither did the nobles invade the territories of the non-noble, nor did the non-noble come upon the territories of the nobles to take a subordinate civil rank under previous proprietors their aliens in race. For the Goths in Spain had no subject race, they merely kept aloof from and despised the Roman Spaniards ; they did not conquer them,—not worth

the conquering. Upon the expulsion of the Moors, the Gothic-Spanish race became the supreme and only race in the greater part of the country, the despised Jews excepted. The men of most mark by their prowess against the Moors, assumed a species of mock nobility, and were endowed with large grants of land, and rather resembled the chieftains of the Homeric régime, chosen to be foremost in the field or in the council for some illustrious achievements of their own or their ancestors, but not alien by race, language, or sentiments from the rest of the nation; for in fact the Christian kingdom of Spain was but a resumption of the power of the old Visigoths, ancient chieftains becoming the new nobles; but all believed themselves really nobles who could show that they did not descend from Jews or Moors.

The consequence of this homogeneity of race is conspicuous all over Spain at the present day; nowhere is there so great a consciousness of equality. Every beggar is a gentleman. The Castilian peasant is the proudest of human beings. The titular noble, shrunk into a city plutocrat, claims respect only by virtue of his office and hereditary distinction. There is no division or tradition of a division by conquest like that of Norman and Saxon, Spartan and Helot, running through Spanish life. In none of the old constitutions of the Peninsula was the legislative body divided into two chambers. The nobles sat in the same chamber with the deputies of the towns, retiring only to deliberate by themselves on matters of importance*, for there was but little essential distinction between a noble and a deputy, and every Goth felt himself to belong to an unconquered race. In the kingdoms of Leon and Castile there was no feudal system†; the conquering chieftains built towns and invited Christian

* Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella, p. 9.

† Hallam; but Prescott says there was in Castile. (Ferd. and Isab., p. 12.)

settlers, but there were no villeins as in conquered countries.* A cloud hangs over the true measure of feudality in Aragon. Some writers tell us that there was a feudal system, others that there was not. The truth seems to be, that the mass of the peasantry belonged to the same race as the chieftains, who were styled nobles, and acted, not like a band of conquering aristocrats, but with that grave and upright judgment which distinguishes a senate, like the Storting of Norway, chosen to legislate for a free people; but below these peasants was a class of serfs, probably immigrants or members of the Moorish or Jewish race, in a more abject state than the lower race in nations founded by an aristocracy of conquest.† They were in fact not a subject commons, owning a few lords without masters, but a pariah caste, upon whom all Visigoths, noble or not noble, looked down. In Catalonia there was actual villenage. The Spaniards who recovered the country from the Moors, seem to have considered the old Romano-Iberian race in Catalonia very much as a subject race, and thus something nearly approaching to a genuine aristocracy was established in Catalonia; and in that province, whose commons were thus subdued by a warrior aristocracy, commerce, carried on by natives of the district, thrived more than in any other part of Spain.

But the deputies of the towns, who sat in the same chamber with the nobles, bore originally very little resemblance to the deputies sent by commercial commons belonging to a subject race, and sent to vie with the nobles in council. The towns of Castile were in fact military corporations; each town was an aggregate of smaller military powers.‡ These military corporations, like great nobles, received grants of circumjacent country, including frequently many towns and villages, just as the

* Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ii. p. 8.

† Prescott, *Ferd. and Isab.*, p. 32, note, p. 208.

‡ Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ii. 29.

nobles received grants of land, and had other privileges of the nobility reserved to them, particularly immunity from taxation.* In the year 1118, the citizens of Saragossa were declared of equal rank with the nobles of the second class in Aragon†; and thus a deputy of such a corporation had a good right to consider himself a person of as much importance in the national councils as a single nobleman.

But though these deputies were in this manner originally the representatives of a military organisation, and thus equal to the nobles, they came in time to resemble very much the deputies of commercial towns; for their position in the Cortes being of uncertain tenure, the same personal influence could not be exercised over them as over the nobles, whom office and titles converted into courtiers. Fresh deputies were always being elected, and it was of course some time before these blandishments could subdue them. Therefore, as contrasted with the nobles of Charles V.'s reign, the deputies have a large share of the stern purity of democratic representatives.

In some parts of Spain, as in the Basque provinces, grants of large districts were not made to great nobles upon the expulsion of the Moors, and property is held in small entailed estates. Here still more than in the rest of Spain is seen the perfect equality of the population. Like the Norwegians, they are all nobles in their own opinion.

This fundamental distinction ought to place the history of Spain in its true light. It has never undergone the first process which is necessary to put nations in the way of complete development — the permanent establishment of an aristocracy by conquest; for the conquest of the Mahometans having been shaken off, the true aristocratic element never existed in any part of Spain, except, perhaps, Catalonia. The want of that element led to the absence of all those struggles between the nobility and commons

* Prescott, Ferd. and Isab. p. 26.

† Robertson, Charles V. i. 316 note xviii.

which mark the early ages of true national development. The nobility of Spain has continued like a line of ancient chieftains, always to be recruited by military services. The populace never entered into any constitutional struggle against the nobles; the corporate townsmen never were true representatives of a democracy; and commerce, which seems never to have made way among genuine Spaniards, furnished no families to the nobility. The commons of Spain, always excepting Catalonia (which included the town of Barcelona), being free from oppression by the nobles, nor harassed by feudal rights, have never made a great and combined struggle against the nobility, nor been driven into towns, and urged to practise commerce as a democratic resource against aristocratic supremacy. The consequence is, that they have lived upon their little estates, and in their happy valleys, very much out of the great world, and not at all gifted with ambition, or ideas about the perfectibility of man, or the sovereignty of the people; not relishing the mechanical, minute occupations of townsmen, but thoroughly independent, unoppressed by functionaries, and left to do very much as they like, except when wanted to serve in the army.

The Castilian nobility was a collection of independent chieftains; no blood distinction dividing them from their subjects and binding the chieftains together, as is the case in aristocracies of conquest. Like the Highland clans, some of these great families and their dependents were always at feud with other great families and their dependents; and they carried their jealousies to such a pitch as sometimes to join with infidels and foreigners in order to weaken a rival chief. The members of the family of Castro, for instance, were in the habit of revolting to the Moors when that step would help them in their struggles with the house of Lara.*

* Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ii. 19.

The sovereign in the Visigoth kingdoms attained his throne, like the king of the Homeric régime, by election. The throne of Aragon was supplied up to 1118 A.D. by the powerful barons electing a sovereign, though generally out of one family ; and he, like the Homeric kings, was little else than the chief of a confederacy. Indeed, the Aragonese government has been compared by Mr. Prescott* to that government which Ulysses met with in Phæacia where King Alcinous is surrounded by his " twelve illustrious peers or archons, subordinate to himself, who, says the king, rule over the people, I myself being the thirteenth."

The history of Spain, from the decline of the Saracenic power, is a history of increasing centralisation and union. First, Leon and Asturias are united to Castile ; then, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, Aragon, to which had been annexed Valencia and Catalonia, was united to Castile ; and the same king conquered Granada (1492) and Navarre (1512), and, in fact, founded the kingdom of Spain. During the reigns of Ferdinand, Charles V., and Philip II. (1474—1598), Spain enjoyed its acme. It had then monarchs of enterprise and refinement, with brilliant courts, patronising warriors, discoverers, and schools of painting ; it had an aristocracy, not founded strictly on conquest over the commons, but still originally military, and fond of living on their estates in the country,† but becoming more and more addicted to the refined and expensive luxury of a court life at Madrid ; so that the fear of the Spanish name was spread by the valour of those whom they led, while its glory was due to the men of thought who lived upon their patronage ; and thus, during the reign of Charles V., the Spanish language was the dominant and fashionable language of Europe. Spain had also a commercial glory, but this

* Ferd. and Isab. p. 23.

† Prescott, Philip II. vol. iii. p. 351.

was of a peculiar character. The inhabitants of the Spanish towns, which were mostly in their origin military corporations, existing, like true nobles, on the produce of the land they possessed, became, as population increased, commercial agriculturists, and raising more products from the soil than they wanted for their consumption, exported the surplus. Presently manufactures arose. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, if not before, Barcelona, thronged with foreigners, rivalled the Italian republics in the extent of its trade; and in the latter half of the fifteenth century, the Spaniards in most of the towns began to export not merely raw material and natural products, but manufactured articles. Seville, the mart of the Indies, then enjoyed a commercial splendour which founded a kind of plutocracy, and produced as its concomitant a school of painters; but the best accounts concur in stating, that the men of commerce in Spain were nearly all foreigners; for commerce was in Spain an untimely exotic, forced on by the discovery of America and the foundation of the colonies, and the native Spaniards took little to it. As Montesquieu says*: "Every one commits their fortune to the Spaniards, and never repents it; but this honest race is so unenergetic that it allows the nations of Europe to carry on all the commerce of their own country under their very eyes."†

It is curious, indeed, to note three distinct efforts in Spain to raise a commercial element — that of the Jews, that of the Moors, and that of the Spanish Netherlands: each in a different way checked, or made to direct their energies to other glory than that of Spain. Thus three times in Spanish history the same stroke was given, as in France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

* *Esprit des Lois*, liv. xix. c. 10.

† In most of the seaport towns in Spain, trade remains in the hand of foreigners. See Brougham's *Colonial Policy*, i. 397, and the authorities there cited.

These germs thus nipped in the bud left Spain proper with no true commercial element. The invariable accompaniment and sign of true commercial greatness is a respectable navy, and this Spain, notwithstanding its vast transatlantic territory, never possessed.*

Thus there appears in Spanish history an absence both of commercial plutocracy and of commercial democracy, for manufactures and trade have taken no hold on the national spirit. The Spaniard who emigrated from the towns to the transatlantic colonies was more of a pirate and military adventurer than a citizen, and the Spaniard now, even in the towns, is the bold, half-brigand, half-smuggler peasant, fond of personal prowess, daring, and rude merriment, very little more cultivated or "civilised" than the Albanian, thoroughly unmechanical and unmethodical; in striking contrast to the orderly Dutchman, the steady, money-making Chinaman, the speculating and be-caféed Frenchman, or the concert and opera-going Venetian, though they are all the subjects of despotism; for the commercial element, which, when firmly established in a nation, contributes more than any other to the splendour and energy of its acme, and effects a change in the national character, that, lasting after the acme is past, leaves a nation of citizens where it found one of peasants, was but a short-lived exotic in Spain. It has perished out of the country: with it departed the glory of Spain, and no vestige remains of it in the character of the rural population.

Another social element — the theocratic — has played a great part in contracting the development of Spanish civilisation. The early Visigoths, like most nations, in their origin were impressed with that enormous degree of faith which leads to what is called, in more enlightened ages, superstition. While they were fighting against the Moors this influence of the hierarchy continued, for

* Mirabeau, *Monarch. Pruss.* iii. 218.

one cause or pretext of war was a difference of religion. The preachers inspired the soldiers, and the sword that acknowledged no other sway was lowered before the crozier.

This influence has hardly ever relaxed in Spanish history. It has controlled the literature of Spain, and has never allowed the spirit of free inquiry to arise in that country. It has tempered even the style of the fine arts, and allied itself with premature despotism, by that unholy alliance so common in history between absolute despotism over the mind and absolute despotism over the body. In Spain, however, more than in other countries, is this alliance appropriate; for when despotism comes on as the last stage of accomplished development, the nation is generally free-thinking and irreverent, and religion is reintroduced with difficulty; but the Spanish people have never emerged from the early stage of primitive superstition. They are at this moment deeply imbued with the most ardent and unreflecting faith; and thus premature despotism, in the reign of Philip II., allied itself easily with unshaken theocracy. The Spanish acme was, among other reasons, deficient, because there never was the anarchy of systems of thought and faith which always accompanies a full development. Theocratic intolerance has ever pervaded Spanish life, and the alliance between despotism and the form of religion which most harmonises with despotism, finally completed by Philip II., has ever since been faithfully preserved: the despotism growing firmer and more consolidated by the corruption of the aristocracy, which in the 16th century began to exchange its primitive character of military chieftainship with local dominion for the luxurious effeminacy of a court life.

It was in fact the very same policy whereby these separate kingdoms had been formerly united into one — the policy which in Charles V. and Philip II.'s reigns made the king absolute — that, carried on to a further

extreme, destroyed the authority of the aristocracy ; a matter the more easy because the aristocracy consisted of chieftains not belonging to a race different from the rest of the nation, and therefore not bound to each other by any very strong tie.* The Austrian dynasty which succeeded to the throne of Spain in 1516, and the subsequent Bourbons, well instructed in the example of France, have completed the centralisation and the emasculation of the nobles, who now or recently were not permitted to marry without the king's consent, nor to leave the court without asking his permission ; an application they were the less likely to make, inasmuch as they considered it a punishment to be sent to their country residences, where they might have been great lords among their tenantry, and have exercised over the population some of the good influences of an aristocracy. As in the later Roman empire so in Spain, the land is entirely in the possession of comparatively few families, who absorb the small proprietors. These families have long formed the habit, which they now retain, of concentrating in Madrid in huge retainer-crowded mansions, enjoying the expensive idleness, the lazy debauchery, and above all, the gambling-tables of that dreary capital, and they possess now no single quality of aristocracy except a great pride of pedigree ; for exclusiveness, which they largely indulge in, is a characteristic more of a plutocracy than of an aristocracy. If the descriptions of them are true, they are now stunted both in intellectual and physical growth by a long ancestral profligacy duly inherited.

They resemble not a little the descendants of the old Roman aristocracy, who frequented the courts of the emperors, and lived the life of a mere plutocracy ; and they show us what the old aristocracy of France would now have been if its destruction by the revolution had not, by

* This was the character of the Castilian nobility, but the Aragonese were more united. — *Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella*, p. 24.

outrooting it altogether, stopped its proceeding in the course of degeneracy upon which it had entered. While the old nobility of Spain is thus living in a rapid decline at Madrid, wasted with idleness and luxury, and fed on titles, the real business of government is carried on by functionaries. The grandees are systematically excluded from ministerial office. Originally the centralising monarchs, Charles V. and Philip II., appointed men born in the lower classes, because they could better rely on their dependence and servility. The system which had been so completely established in the reign of Philip II., that the nobles were never appointed to important positions in the state or in the army *, but were absorbed by the honourable offices connected with the royal household, has been continued even after the nobility has ceased to be formidable. An authority whom I have much consulted on Spain, writes, "The most powerful of the ministers of Spain have for many years been either foreigners or adventurers. Alberoni rose by match-making and intrigue ; Farinelli by singing ; Ripperda was a Dutchman ; Squillaci an Italian ; Wall an Irish gambler and debauchee ; Godoz an uneducated minion of a wedded strumpet ; Calomarde the son of a maker of hempen sandals ; Zea a clerk in a counting-house at St. Petersburg. The history of their low origin, extraordinary elevation, absolute power, sudden and utter fall, could only find a parallel in the harems and divans of Bagdad and Constantinople."

This sudden upraising is the more easy in Spain, because of the natural equality and nobility of the people. Every man believing himself, however poor, a nobleman, and really being so in breeding and bearing, does not feel uncomfortable and out of his place, or unduly elated when promoted to high office. I am afraid, however, that graceful and dignified as may be

* Prescott's Philip II. vol. iii. p. 352.

the bearing of Spanish functionaries, their morale is as low as that of the trading underpaid officials under any other despotism. Mr. Ford says, "A man who does not feather his nest is not thought honest, but a fool. It is necessary, nay a duty as in the east, that all should live by their office, and as office is short and insecure, no time or means is neglected in making up a purse. From 1800 to 1844 there have been seventy-four ministers of finance, and all with 'no effects.' Nine ministries have been formed from May 1843 to May 1844, and each rather worse than the preceding one."

Such is the governing class in Spain. The real Spanish people remain to this day simple and very independent peasants, not at all mechanical, thrifty, or capital-ridden, as are the peasant proprietors of France, who have had spread over them the spirit of town life, and commerce, and the love of fashionable luxuries, but rather resembling the free and sturdy Norwegians, fond of the chase and the war, save only that the corruption of the government for upwards of three centuries, and their gloomy superstition, have told with sad effect upon their character, and made them all in public life what most of them do not seem to be in private, faithless, cruel, and rapacious. It is not in the character of stationary despotisms to preserve virtues unimpaired, however successful may be its care of the vices which it finds established; though, from the concentration of the vileness of the nation to Madrid, and the great local independence of many parts of Spain, unmolested by functionaries from the capital, the Spanish character seems to have been as little contaminated by its government as in the nature of things is possible.

The individual Spaniard, when untainted by office, is a fine and noble character, but the misfortune is that he has no respect for those who are placed above him. Partly this is owing to the absence of any original distinction between a conquering and a conquered race; which, when it exists, instils a kind of traditionary respect

into the mass of a nation, that often lasts long after the governing class has ceased to be alien by blood from the governed ; but much more is this want of respect caused by the want of respectability. The Spaniard distrusts those who administer affairs, they distrust him in return, and when distrusted a man is somewhat prone to do acts deserving distrust, for he has then no fears upon him that he is abusing confidence. So there is no trust and no respect between the governing and the governed, and fear is the only principle of government.

This condition of the Spanish people, a noble and fine race, topped by a corrupt nobility and a worthless functionary despotism, so that, regarded in its public actions, Spain is degraded beyond all precedent of infamy, leads me to note here the too-hasty manner in which nations, are often judged by those who contemplate only their public and political character. A part, and that the most liable to corruption and the most corrupt, is taken for the whole. It is so with Spain, and so to a great extent with Northern Italy. The chief towns of Lombardy contain a population of the mass of which little good can be said. Those who are rich spend their wealth in useless and lazy profligacy, preferring an unhealthy and emasculating town life to life on a country estate. Those who are poor have as much profligacy and sensuality as they can buy, and lay in a good store of selfishness, for that is cheap, and as it deadens conscience, opens new ways of gambling into wealth. The traveller, transported from terminus to terminus, would derive his idea of the Northern Italians solely from Milan, Venice, and Padua, and arrive at a conclusion very much like that of the historical student who should read only the histories of those parts during the last 200 years. But in the smaller towns and out-of-the-way districts the population is healthy, robust, and honest ; both physically and morally untainted by the corruption of the great towns. In Brescia, for instance, the landowners are for the most

part resident on their estates, fond of country, athletic sports, and abounding in hospitality and *bonhomie*, and the peasantry is a fine simple and contented race, making good agriculturists and good soldiers. So, Tuscany on account of its Grand Duke, his priests, and his Austrian dictators, used to be spoken of in words not chosen from the vocabulary of eulogy; but recent events have shown that whatever the population of Florence may be, the peasants in the country districts of Tuscany are a healthy, happy, and honest race, who have some liking for at least the name of liberty.

We see, therefore, that despotism may often be the appropriate government for the population of the capital and the large towns, while it is inappropriate to the peasantry of the remote districts. / This is different from the condition of China, France, or Prussia, where despotism is appropriate to the rural as well as the civic populations. But even in these countries, at least in the two latter, there are oases little affected by the general social atmosphere of the country, so, that the rash theorist who should delineate a character, and say that it belonged universally to all Frenchmen and to all Prussians, might easily be furnished with a refuting specimen.

CHAP. XXVI.

STATIONARY DESPOTISMS.

"Before we wish eagerly for anything, we should inquire into the happiness of him who possesses it."—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

"It is with nations as with nature, which, according to a happy expression of Goethe, knows no pause in unceasing movement, development, and production, and has attached a curse to standing still."—HUMBOLDT.

"And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them."—LEVITICUS, xx. 23.

ONE of those great principles that admits us to the knowledge of the great scheme according to which nations live, is that *no measure of time regulates the duration of the stages of their progress*. The infancy of one nation may last longer than the whole life of another. Norway has remained substantially unchanged, while first Italy, then Holland, then France, passed through their varied developments. Sparta endured throughout the whole of the Athenian career in effect the same Sparta as in the days when Athens was a rural village without its Piræus. England has remained in its constitutional stage with but slight and unsubstantial changes, while France, starting abreast with England under an aristocratic monarchy, has passed on with unhappy rapidity to despotism.

Long duration is not an attribute of any particular stage, but (speaking in vulgar language) is an accident depending solely on the absence of those causes which

naturally bring about a change from any one stage to that which is ordained to succeed it. Therefore, whether a nation which has not arrived at a despotism is stationary or not, is in each case a matter of private history. Stagnation cannot be predicated as the unvarying attribute of any stage of national existence previous to despotism. If it could, national progress would of course cease from that point. But when a nation has in the fulness of time arrived at a despotic functionarism, imposed upon it appropriately because all the required characteristics are present, then what progress is before it?—None.

The awful drama of providence, as it is read in the history of nations, what is it but a tragedy? To the nations in the last act of this tragedy, the term stationary is more complimentary than accurate. They move, but it is the movement of degeneracy and decay, and if they are to outward appearance the same, it is only because despotism is their irrevocable lot.

The "Decline and Fall" records this phase of history of a nation whose last centuries were invested with a more signal lustre than other nations attain in their acme. The Roman state in the Augustan era had just passed, with a rapidity disproportioned to the duration of its earlier stages, through the stage of mingled democracy and plutocracy. Whatever was left of the patricians had made common cause with the enriched plebeian families, and both were hated with a common hatred by the simpler and poorer citizens, and called by the common name of nobles.* The court in which the splendid Augustus presided was a court of plutocrats. Scarcely a single attribute of the old patrician spirit remained. Simple manners, love of country life, high personal dignity, all the fine attributes of a warrior aristocracy, had passed away, and those who fluttered about in the marble palaces of the Capitol had exchanged the old Roman indepen-

* Montesquieu, *Grandeur*, &c. viii. Niebuhr, *Hist. of Rom.* iv. 319.

dence of character for a love of pomp, of luxury, of office. Take away Augustus from the picture, and the Rome of his age might be put forward as the most marked example of a luxurious plutocracy. They abandoned every duty that belongs to landed proprietors ; they preferred to have their estates cultivated by slaves rather than freemen, for it was cheaper ; they left the wretched beings nothing but a scanty sustenance, and spent the proceeds of this servile labour, and of the tribute they purloined from subject countries, in the vulgar splendour and the magnificent profligacy of the Capitol.

The great men for whom we honour that and the succeeding age are the severest witnesses against them. The troubled minds of Juvenal, Tacitus, Horace, never tired of drawing scornful contrasts between the old Roman aristocracy that lived upon its farms and directed the plough, and the more educated, more refined, but more debauched plutocracy with whom these illustrious men unwillingly consorted. The opinion of Virgil was still more marked, and his end more practical. The *Georgics*, it is said, were undertaken at the instance of Augustus, to exhort the Roman plutocracy to return to agriculture and a country life.

“ Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini,
Hanc Remus et frater : sic fortis Etruria crevit,
Scilicet, et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.”

That wise and patriotic thought of the emperor, elaborated with all the beauty of Virgil's verse, failed miserably in its effect. It is easy to convert a country-loving aristocracy into a town plutocracy, as Richelieu proved ; but I know no instance of the converse process. They who in such an age leave the town for the country are like that Umbricius whom Juvenal, in the most charming of his compositions, accompanies on his road to Cumæ ; not members of the gay plutocracy, but the despised citizens, shouldered out of every honour because they are not rich enough to be luxurious, and going to

seek in a country cottage that quiet, that honour in a moderate competence which is denied them in the city.

One of the most interesting episodes in the heavy treatise of Filangieri*, is his project for re-rusticating the plutocracies of Italy. But the political writer was as powerless as the poet. The now impoverished plutocracies of Genoa, of Venice, of Florence, love and practise the duties of a country life as little as they did when Filangieri wrote.

There is a city less wealthy, less powerful, than Augustan Rome, but like it in being the seat of a great empire, and the centre of a system more centralised than any since the Roman empire. There is an imperial Court surrounded by a gay plutocracy that scorns the quiet duties of a country life, and gives itself wholly up to the luxury of the Capitol. That Court itself invites comparison with the empire of Rome. Happy would it be for France, if Napoleon could infuse into his Parisian plutocrats some love of rural scenes, some ambition of country life.

Ever since 1780, agriculture has been at intervals the subject of governmental solicitude in France. At that early date, societies for its encouragement were formed, and prizes distributed; and so in 1856 Paris was the seat of a great agricultural show, promoted by the Emperor with the most patriotic of intentions. But all the encouragement of the government, strong as the influence of government is in France, has never overcome that distaste for agriculture and country life which came over the French long before the revolution. The noble emigrated to the capital and became a gorgeous plutocrat; the object of the small cultivator's ambition was to get just enough money to abandon the country for the town, and buy a small public office. It is the same now; no one lays out his capital on agriculture who can help doing so, but rather lives in the town, and

* Scienza della Legisl. lib. ii. ch. 15.

though he cannot now buy an office there, he can and does lay out his money in the joint-stock speculations with which France is overrun, and which yield him a larger income than he could acquire on his farm, and allow him to live in the inglorious ease and the cheap luxury of his café and his theatre.

As soon as despotism and the national character have become appropriate to each other all progress ends, and stationarism supervenes. You may change the despot as often as you please; you cannot change the government. Revolutions, which are wars against principles, and have for their object to establish a new form of government, which, in the opinion of those who support it, is more suited to the national character, scarcely ever occur under a despotism which is appropriate to the national character; and when they do, they are invariably unsuccessful. But though revolutions never occur, rebellions do, and frequently, for they aim, not at a change in the form of government, but at a change in the functionaries who govern—

“ Combattent follement pour le choix des tyrans.”

The distinction deserves well to be remarked. The movement in France at the end of the last century was essentially a revolution, for it was caused by the incongruity between established institutions and social wants, and its effort was to remove those institutions and replace them by others more suited to the altered character of the nation. M. de Tocqueville's most recent book is an exposé of the growth, under the old French régime, of the social conditions which rendered the new régime necessary; for example, peasant proprietorship and centralised administration were both inconsistent with the retention of the feudal privileges without the substantive power which originally gave those privileges. The revolution was the violent effort by which the institutions and the national character were brought into harmony. It is often said on the Continent that the English make no

revolutions. On the contrary, we are always in a state of revolution, constantly adapting our institutions to our social changes; and as the machinery of our government admits this constant adaptation to take place without resort to arms, we have not, for nearly two centuries, had occasion for any of those violent efforts which are necessitated by an increasing incongruity that cannot otherwise be remedied. In proportion to the effect to be achieved, in proportion to the incongruity between the governmental system and the national character, are the violence and horror of the revolution. The first French revolution was the most violent of any of which we have record, because that incongruity was the greatest. The result of it was to establish a centralised administration, which the subsequent revolutions or rebellions have never shaken. All agree in despairing of the decentralisation of France. If they support a Bourbon or a Napoleon, it is only to make him the centre of the present system. If they support a democracy, it is only that the functionaries who work the system may work in the name of a republic. All the movements in France since Napoleon I. have been gradually losing the character of revolutions and becoming mere rebellions; they have sought to change not the system but the men. There may be many more rebellions in France, but another revolution would be a portent.

Rebellions, as distinguished from revolutions, are the desperate remedies of men who, from political necessity, despair of shaking off the established system, while they determine to have it better administered. The motives which urge them to rebel are not ennobled by the intermixture of great principles and high discussions on the true form of government, or the rights and duties of the governors, but stand forward bare of all that could elevate and adorn them. They are the same motives which impel a starving slave to burst open his master's granary, and, when he is replete, allow him to subside to his former condition of subserviency. Rebellions with a good material cause,

such as starvation, over-taxation, cruelty, are far easier to bring to a successful issue in a despotism than they would be in a free government; for the sudden shout of a small knot of resolute rebels, which were lost in the perpetual hubbub of a people habituated to express their sentiments, resounds with an awful and thrilling echo through the still air of despotism.

For despotism is the government of silence. The best of those that escort him who founds an empire to his throne, escort him because they read upon his banners, "Tranquillity," and to tranquillity is essential the silence of "armed opinions." We know how eloquence ceased when Augustus ascended the throne. We know how the two Napoleons swept the schools clear of the disputatious professors of politics, the newspaper ideologists, and those who made the clumsy advocacy of an abstract principle the ill-disguised means of scaling the political ladder. We know also how, in the indiscriminate edicts against speech, the true and honest statesman, the free and plain citizen, who loves to talk over his opinions, is condemned, with the garrulous crowd, to a silence that breaks the spirit of those who, however unwillingly, submit to it—

"Cur facunda parum decoro
Lingua cadit silentio."

And when they speak, they speak as those who can receive no second admonition, but air their vocabulary in the *λόγοι ἐπιδεικτικοί*,—their orations at the academy, where they talk flat compliments in flowing periods. In a generation where despotism is in other ways appropriate, silence becomes a national habit, and the nation that became silent by force remains so, because it has lost the high and noble ideas that mutually inspire and are inspired by the liberty of speech. It speaks not, because it knows to speak no longer of anything but its sensual and material interests.

That these material interests, and these almost alone,

are the causes of the rebellions which so often place in office a new but not a better set of functionaries, is one of the luminous facts which disclose at a flash the character and nature of these populations. When the government, true to the paternal theory, has taken upon itself all the provision for the material happiness of the people, and taught them to believe that they owe all their welfare to the government, it is not wonderful that, if their material happiness suffers severe diminution, the government should be considered the source of the evil. It wishes to enter into a partnership with nature, and share the profit of gratitude that belongs to nature's beneficence; but the simple equity of the subjects requires that if it does so it should also share the losses of popularity consequent on the shortcomings of nature. In the end, most governments find that it is a dangerous speculation to enter business as God's partner.

The Chinese, who, through all the time of historical memory, have lived under a stationary despotism, carry this feeling—with them become a second nature—further than nations who yet have among them the traditions of other kinds of government. Droughts, epidemics, piracies, earthquakes, wars, any grievances, whether arising from political or natural causes, are, in the convictions of the Chinese, the fault of his rulers, and rebellion, for the purpose of setting up a better set of rulers, is the remedy to which he invariably resorts if his harvest is short, his water deficient, or his house overthrown by a tornado.* Compare this with the state of the Swedish mind, not yet debased by centralisation. They bear with the utmost patience the pressure of a bad season, for, left to their own resources, they know that they are only submitting to a great law of nature, and not to the caprices of their rulers.†

This dependence on government is the most sure sign of

* See Meadows, *The Chinese and their Rebellions*.

† Malthus, *Population*, i. 410.

accomplished centralisation. It is curious to trace it coming on ; to read in the history of pre-revolutionary France how the provincials, fully convinced of the inutility and inefficiency of their local potentates, implored the government to send them inspectors to regulate agriculture, markets, and all the other adjustments of rural life ; and, as a logical consequence, when agriculture failed, or markets were out of order, or a murrain seized their cattle, their discontent fell upon the government. This feeling has been steadily increasing in France, upon it is founded the present régime, and if it goes on increasing at the same rate as it has done, the mind of the Frenchman will soon, like that of the Chinese, be unable to distinguish between the Divine Providence and that of the central government.

Let us not mistake this feeling for loyalty. Loyalty, which is a sentiment worthy of a freeman, exists no longer in the fairest kingdoms of the Continent. It is the offspring of feudality. Each vassal regarded his lord with a mingled feeling of pride in having so great and powerful a chieftain to lead him to victory and glory ; of respect due to his frank and honourable bearing and his illustrious ancestors ; often, too, joined with a personal affection, inspired by the many acts of condescension and kindness by which a man in high station may easily, without lowering the self-respect of those below him, conciliate their regard, and make them look upon him rather as the head of a family than as a master. The lords, thus honoured by their vassals, chose one of their number to be a king. Some of that respect which the vassals felt for their respective lords is paid to the king to whom those lords have sworn allegiance. When royalty becomes hereditary, and the power and stability of the baronial families decline, all that respect and affection which ebbs away from the mesne lord accrues to the holders of the throne. It is then he and his ancestors who have led the nation to battle ; it is he who gives

forth just and salutary laws ; it is to him alone the vassal, oppressed by his lord, can look for succour and protection ; it is from him alone the townsmen obtain their charter of immunity ; it is by his grace and beneficence alone they can repel exacting barons, to whom no longer submissive, they become hostile. As the head of the aristocrats, the person to whom even they bow, he arrogates to himself all those feelings which the sublimity of a warrior aristocracy has inspired into its subjects ; he attracts to himself all the splendour and pomp of the country ; and, lastly, there belongs to him a sacred character, which nearly connects in the mind of a believing nation this loftiest of human beings with that Being who is more than human.

This is loyalty in its origin. In some respects changed, in many lessened, it yet lasts through the constitutional period of a nation, so long as the hereditary monarchy, however limited in power, endures. But never confound this sentiment of respectful allegiance, which exalts and refines the mind of the freeman who cherishes it, with that servility to a public government, despised while it is obeyed, and obeyed as a necessary evil,—a servility degenerating at last into blind and abject fear, which, sad to say, has, over nearly the whole continent of Europe, now taken the place of ancient loyalty.

This grim idol called the state, the central government before whose decrees, administered by paid and trading functionaries, every private interest, however just, must bow, in whose presence every free thought is repressed, by whose ministers the minds of the nation are drilled according to one common and abject standard, had heralds proclaiming and praying for its advent long before it settled upon the fairest nations of modern Europe.

The economists of the eighteenth century, amid the anticipated ruins of the feudal and constitutional régime, erected for the worship of their imaginations that centralised despotism, now too common, but for which, in

their days, the only perfect existing model was sought in China. China and its despotism were the theme of their every praise. Were they so unnaturally?

China usually excites the wonder and the scorn of the free nations of the world, who are, perhaps, as just in their scorn as foolish in their wonder. Suppose we had been introduced to the Constantinopolitan empire about the year 1440, and knowing nothing of its history but what we heard from travellers, of the stagnant state of civilisation, the beautiful monuments, the vast learning, and the ingenious arts which were to be found in that empire, and yet the abject, scoundrel character of the people, and the facility with which they could be conquered by a horde of barbarians,—when we saw all this, and many more apparent inconsistencies, should we not have marvelled? and yet, *mutatis mutandis*, this has been the condition of China ever since its history has been known to Europe. The flourishing period of its career, when it was in a state of liberty and progress, is lost to our memory; and China has always stood before the cultivated world as an example of a nation in the last stage of stationary despotism. In nothing has it differed from other nations which have completely arrived at the same stage, except in duration. As Norway presents to us a living and long-enduring example of the earliest stage of national progress, so China of the latest. And China had arrived at this stage before the Norwegian nation commenced its existence.

The points which are chiefly selected for praise by the admirers of Chinese civilisation are,—1st. The general education of the people, for almost every man knows how to read and write, and can derive instruction from the current literature of the day. 2nd. The universal addiction to business, and the penurious saving of the profits made therein. 3rd. The absence of political turmoil (except in the fits of anarchy to which China, like every other despotism, is subject). The whole business

of government being quietly given up to the public functionaries. 4th. The mode in which these functionaries are elected, viz., by merit, tested at the most severe examinations, open to all citizens. 5th. The tolerance of all creeds, and the freedom from any religious belief so earnest as to be politically troublesome. 6th. The uniformity of character, habits, and sentiments throughout the vast empire.* 7th. The absence of an aristocracy.

* The paternal government of China is said, by the Abbé de Marcy, to take under its protection the politeness and courtesy of the people. The manner of saluting, paying visits, and making presents are all laid down in a code of laws, whose infringement brings the offender before a special tribunal at Pekin.

CHAP. XXVII.

DESPOTISM BY CONQUEST.

"Happy Palmyra ! in thy desert domes,
 Where only date-trees sigh, and serpents hiss,
 And thou whose pillars are but silent homes
 For the stork's blood — superb Persepolis !
 Thrice happy both, that your extinguish'd race
 Have left no embers, no half-living trace,
 No slaves to crawl around the once proud spot,
 Till past renown in present shame's forgot."—MOORE.

THE necessity of a certain degree of public virtue in those who establish despotic functionarism is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. The hope and the belief that they will govern with more probity than the politicians whom they oust reconciles the subjects to their iron rule ; nor could the nation consent to resign the whole work of government into the hands of a selected class, unless it had confidence that that class was animated by a spirit of justice towards all the factions of the state, and by a lively zeal for the public advantage.

The morality of the despotic functionary is never of that high and noble character which belongs to the statesman of a free country, who feels himself not a ruler of slaves, but invested by free men with the most sacred of trusts. In a functionarism each man lives by his office, and, were he left without check by his fellows, would probably make that office as lucrative as he could ; but individual profligacy is controlled by collective merit,

for, taking the government as a whole, its desire in well-ordered functionarism is to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number by means as little detrimental as possible to the governed, provided they secure the safety of the government.

So long as there is left in a nation sufficient public virtue to fill the offices of functionarism with men who possess this qualified sense of public duty, there is a guarantee against those who actually hold the offices falling below it, because the nation would, if those in office fell below the attainable level, eject them by force of arms, and place a better set of functionaries in their stead.

This change is in fact the object of the rebellions which are so common in countries governed by despotic functionarism, — rebellions promoted doubtless by those who hope to get into office by means of them, but meeting with the sympathy of the people because they hope thereby to substitute a more virtuous set of public functionaries. But even this degree of public virtue is sometimes wanting, not merely in the functionaries, but in those who alone can supply their place. This arises from one of two causes : either from the corruption of the class from which alone functionaries are chosen, as is the case in Spain, where the functionaries are chosen from the hungry candidates who lounge about Madrid ; or in the corruption of the whole nation, as is the case in China, Hindostan, and the Byzantine empire. When this disastrous issue takes place, and the whole object of each functionary is the attainment of his place and its subsequent enjoyment in the manner most profitable to himself, the material good which accrues to a people governed by a well-ordered functionarism is entirely taken away, and they are nothing but the victims of the most unscrupulous and worthless of their number. The resource in the first alternative is to admit a different class of the population to the public functions. In the second there is no hope of improvement but in the invasion of a more honest and trustworthy

race. When nations have become unfit for self-government, not merely in the constitutional sense of the term, but in the sense of not being able to select from among their body persons of sufficient probity to conduct the government without open profligacy, the frank brutality of foreign barbarians is preferable to the polite scoundrelism of native citizens.

As national history begins with an invasion, or what is equivalent thereto, so it may end with an invasion which terminates the native despotism.

The relation between the effete conquered nations and the conquerors is subject to considerable variety, depending, however, more upon the stage of national progress in which the conquerors may happen to be than upon the condition of the conquered, for in no stage are different nations more uniform and alike than in the last stage of stagnant despotism. There is no greater equaliser than age in nations or in men.

“*Plurima sunt juvenum discrimina : pulchrior ille
Hoc, atque ille alio ; multum hic robustior ille
Una senum facies, cum voce trementia membra
Et jam læve caput, madidique infantia nasi.*”—JUVENAL.

The conquerors of effete nations are usually those migratory and unsettled tribes, who, nurtured in the rough forest or the mountain, make occasional descents on the peaceful inhabitants of the plain. If the latter are conquered while they are simple agriculturists, the result is the foundation of an aristocracy and a progressive nation. If the attack is made while the nation is sound, healthy, and not enervated by luxury, the result is that which followed the attack of the Gauls against Rome in the 108th Ol., or of Xerxes against Greece. If, on the other hand, the nation is unwarlike and corrupt, success awaits the invaders as it did the Macedonians and afterwards the Romans in Greece, the Turks in the Byzantine empire, the Tartars in China, the Moguls in Hindostan, and the French and Austrians in Italy.

The species of conquest most easy of any to make is the conquest of a nation already sunk under a central despotism ; for, as has been truly said, "The subjects of a despotic government are so wonderfully ignorant of what is passing, and, from the habit of slavery, so indifferent to public events, except in so far as they affect their own private convenience from day to day, that they bear the greatest political changes with an apathy hardly to be conceived by the knowing, jealous inhabitants of a free society."* But when that conquest is made, a new nation is not founded. The conquered remain the same abject, servile, corrupt wretches that the governed had been under the stagnant despotism, without hope, without faith, without loyalty, and without respect. The conquerors, meanwhile, take the place of the old despotic functionaries. These are the pashas of Turkey, the generals of Alexandria, the prefects of Rome in Greece and Egypt. Each has committed to his watchful care one member of the long captive train of fair anile cities and dowager queens of the ocean.

Now there will be no more progress after such a conquest than before, because, according to the view which this book is intended to establish, *national progress consists in a development of the commons or subject race, aided, it may be, by certain changes in the aristocrats.* The conquered subjects of these despotisms have passed through their development, and never, so far as history discloses to us, is the course retraversed.

It is obvious that the position of the conquerors is one of great temptation, for they settle not among a hardy, simple population whom it would take little to arouse against their conquerors, — a population submissive only because, strong themselves, they acknowledge the new race to be stronger. The possession of such a class of subjects urges the aristocrats to the maintenance of their

* Lord Dudley's Letters, p. 102.

vigour and martial habits, while at the same time if they wanted luxuries they would have to invent them.

On the contrary, the warriors who settle among an effete and luxurious nation, versed in the arts of civilised delight, are easily accepted as more honest rulers than those who went before them, have little to fear from the open attack of their subjects, and are quickly taught by them all the ways of accomplished effeminacy. Instead, therefore, of joining, like the aristocrats who conquer a simple agricultural peasantry in the course of national progress which has been sketched in the foregoing essays, these conquerors soon acquire the peaceful, idle habits of the effete nations they have conquered, and themselves give way as soon as a relay of stronger and hardier men comes to compete their empire. Such have been the causes of the degeneracy of the Turks in Europe, of the Mahometans in India, the Mantchoo Tartars in China, the Macedonians in Greece, the Parthians in Babylonia and Persia.* But even when they have fallen from their high estate, and, in common with their former subjects, are ruled by new masters, there is to be observed in them a higher feeling of honour, less low and sordid cunning and depravity than the twice conquered race exhibits.† For ages the descendants of the two races are capable of being distinguished by their ethical qualities.

It is, I think, impossible to deny that such conquests as these are beneficial to the conquered in proportion to the probity and moderation of the conquerors; and as each successive layer wears out, the new race provides for the nation a want severely felt, namely, a set of rulers less dastardly and depraved than those before in office.

A curious fate was that of the functionarism of imperial

* Niebuhr, H. R. v. 309, *sqq.*

† Among other witnesses of this contrast between the Mahometan and the Hindoo in British India, is Mr. Mill (*Hist. of British India*, ii. 434—457). So between the Mantchoo Tartars and the Chinese, M. Huc (*Huc's China*, i. 169).

Rome. No sooner was despotic functionarism completely established than the character of functionaries became intolerably corrupt* ; but instead of the barbarians at once making a successful incursion and totally outrooting the Romans from the government, they were gradually absorbed into the government ; and the native functionarism, too corrupt to go on without infusion of new blood, was from the time of Diocletian gradually supplanted by barbarians, and at last saw, in the person of Maximin, a barbarian for its central head. After that the only political change in Roman civilisation is the increased degree in which the native rulers were supplanted by the rude but brave and frank barbarians.

It is manifest that the incongruity between warlike tribesmen and cultivated townsmen must be so great as, irrespective of their governmental position, to preclude all sympathy between the two races ; and therefore for a refined effete population, the most suitable rulers are those more akin to themselves in civilisation, however alien they may be in moral character.

I have no hesitation in saying that the Mahometan conquest of India conferred a benefit upon the conquered people. After their conquest the Mahometan character declined, and the same good that resulted from their conquest to those whom they conquered now results to both Mahometan and Hindoo from the British dominion. To a population incapable of self-government, in any sense of the term, there is supplied a tribe of rulers on whose probity and good intentions all can implicitly rely, while the civilisation of the conquerors prevents their being those foes to order and security which rude warriors often are. Were their British rulers removed, the natives of India would feel, like the Cappadocians of old, naked without their chains. The Parsees alone are fit for freedom, and they are too few to live without rulers and

* Montesquieu, *Grandeur et Décad.*, ch. xvii.

protectors belonging to a strange race. So necessary is an absolute government for the Hindoos and Mahometans, that our Parliament occasionally presents to the world one of the most curious spectacles that the incongruity between nations in different stages ruled by one race can produce,—the spectacle of the senate of a country that makes freedom its boast framing a despotic government for India.

In another way also the rule of India by the English is curious. Our countrymen who go out to India do not depart from us for ever to live as conquerors, but after a period of rule, long enough to imbue them with many of the personal characteristics of conquerors, they return to their native country plain and even humble citizens. Those who are most like the conquering settlers of other countries are the serjeants, who purchase their discharge and settle in India. According to the common report, they soon give way to the corrupt influences of the natives, and contribute but negatively to the renown of England or the benefits derived from our rule; and among the causes of the late mutiny, General Jacob enumerates the lowering of the English character, produced by a long residence in India,—a curious operation of the same causes which softened the first Teutonic conquerors of Italy and of France, and the Macedonians in Greece.

This government by prefecture is perhaps the most beneficial that can be established in a country of corrupt morality, so long as the morality of the nation which supplies the prefects is high. Our Indian government will continue to be a blessing to the natives, so long as our character for probity remains. If that fails, then our government would be worse than that of the Arabs, the Tartars, or the Persians, for they, living permanently in the country, would take some interest in relieving it from utter misery, while a corrupt English Verres going to it, but as a mine to make money out of, would return to spend that money in the only country to which he had

any ties or sympathies.* And indeed our empire must then fall, for it is now based only on the belief of the subject millions in our moral superiority.

When the successive conquerors, each more warlike and honest, live among the cultivated and effeminate people, a mixed but not progressive population is produced whose character varies according to the proportions of the constituent elements. When there is less of the old civic luxurious population remaining and more of the successive layers of conquerors, the population is rougher, more honest, and more warlike; when, on the other hand, the civic population has assimilated the conquerors to itself, the result is a slothful, intriguing, and sensual race, the ready prey of any new invader.

Of populations thus constituted there are many examples. We may take as one extreme the Egyptians, out of whom the old civilised element has in the long course of ages nearly departed, so that the population of Egypt now consists almost entirely of the successive layers of the Romans, Arabs, Mamelukes, Turks who have regaled themselves with the spoils of the descendants of an older civilisation †, and, as the other extreme, the Greek nation, which is easily analysed into its elements. For the Greek of the town is still the subtle, crafty, untrustworthy scoundrel, that he has been for two thousand years, though he perhaps has Roman as well as Hellenic blood in his veins; and when noble poets, at the beginning of this century, sent out notices in verse that if there chanced be any genuine son of Themistocles or Miltiades, he might hear of something to his advantage, these civic Greeks were found to be no moral represen-

* See Burke's attack on our Indian government, Works, iv. 38, *sqq.*

† Among the Eastern nations it is considered a disgrace to be an Egyptian. "For the freeborn never forget that the banks of the Nile have for centuries been ruled by the slaves of slaves. 'He shall be called an Egyptian' is a denunciation strikingly fulfilled." — *Burton's Pilgrimage to El Medinah and Meccah*, i. 259.

tatives of those ancestors. The Greek of the mountain is altogether different, he is the rude Albanian, who, pirate and bandit though he occasionally be, like our Danish ancestors and the modern Spaniard, is a finer specimen of humanity, and inspiring better hopes for the future of Greece than the dapper manœuverers in the Athenian counting-house. For our rude ancestors—the Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the whole of the Scandinavian hordes who spread over Europe—what were they but robbers by land or by sea? and yet they contained within their loins the seeds of mighty nations. Confound not their brigandage with the selfish, cowardly cheating of the Chinese. They lived in an age and country where the division of labour had not drawn a line between the robber and the non-robber. Every man was upon occasion robber, and, like the Spartan, thought it no disgrace to be so, but would boast of it as a proof of prowess and skill. None but the brave deserve possessions. When a new code of morality decreed that honest men should not rob, then thieves became a special class of society, dishonourable and depraved because they habitually do what they believe to be wrong. The thief, and he who by cunning and cheating on the windy side of the law incurs the guilt of thieving without the merit of its courage, operates by himself or with at most a small gang, who more often than not betray each other. There is no confidence and frank reliance. He knows himself for a rascal, and he believes others to be as bad. Not so the warlike brigand, he does not scorn himself, and he relies on his trusty fellows with as implicit a reliance as that which animates compatriots fighting side by side for their country.

The brigandage of the Albanian, who sees no harm in it, need not prevent our hoping well of a nation which he may help to found, provided he can do so without admixture of that depraved element which lives in the cities of the plain at the foot of his mountain fastnesses.

When the old nation is wholly eradicated, and the

country once occupied and rendered famous by it, is peopled by a new race or a collection of new races, the latter may of course enter upon their career of national progress in the same way as if they settled in an entirely new country. The Italians of the middle ages had scarce any relation with the ancient Romans, except the accident that the one people occupied the same country after the other, and first corrupting the old language of the Peninsula, afterwards so refined it and fused it with their own Teutonic as to give to the world another classic tongue. Those of the old Roman races who did remain to take part in the new civilisation were like the Veneti, tribes dwelling remote from the luxurious and depraved people of the capital, for the latter in great measure migrated with the court to Constantinople, and left Italy to be the unresisting prey of those barbarians out of whom the races of mediæval Italians arose.

When history has perished, and it is impossible to distinguish by tradition the descendants of an old effete civilisation from those of the rude barbarians who have established themselves by conquest in the country subsequently to the decay of its civilisation, a never-failing criterion is to be found in character.

The character of the Britons, as sketched by one who wrote when Rome was under its second imperial despot, gives in one sentence the qualities which denote a people fit to be the founders of a nation. "Men of simple habits, far removed from the tricky-mindedness and wickedness of the people of our time—in all their modes of living, frugal, and free from expensive luxuries."*

And Juvenal says, "We have carried our arms to the limits of the earth, to the rude Britons of the north, and the islands of the West, but in all the nations we have

* τοῖς δ' ἤθεσιν ἀπλοῦς εἶναι, καὶ πολὺ κεχωρισμένους τῆς τῶν νῦν ἀνθρώπων ἀγχινοίας καὶ πονηρίας· τὰς τε διαίτας εὐτελεῖς ἔχειν, καὶ τῆς ἐκ τοῦ πλούτου γεννωμένης τρυφῆς πολὺ διαλλάττοντας.—*Diod. Sic. lib. v. cap. 21.*

conquered, you will seek in vain for the vice which is at this day practised in the city of the conquerors.”*

The barbarians who conquered the Roman empire have left recorded the scorn with which they looked upon a Roman. “When we are desirous,” said Luitprand, “of insulting an enemy, we call him a Roman, for in this name is comprehended the sum of mendacity, debauchery, and universal vice.”† And as in the population of declining Rome, so now among the Chinese, the Greeks of the cities‡, the common Italians of the towns in Lombardy and Tuscany, there is a want of that well-placed confidence which is a main element of progressive civilization.§ Nothing makes a man a liar and a rogue so surely as his discovery that no one places confidence in him; but as honesty begets confidence, so confidence in return inspires an honourable desire to deserve it. When there is neither honesty nor confidence, there may be ingenuity, energy, subtlety, but there is a sordid depravity of selfishness, the most revolting form of human degradation.

The ingenuity of the fallen nations is one of their most striking characteristics, an ingenuity often greater than that which they possessed in the days of their grandeur and glory. Of the Jews, it has been noted, as a re-

* —“arma equidem ultra
Littora Juvernæ promovimus, et modo captas
Orcadas, ac minimâ contentos nocte Britannos,
Sed quæ nunc populi fiunt victoris in urbe
Non faciunt illi quos vicimus.” *Juv. Sat. ii. 159, sqq.*

† “Hoc solo, id est quidquid luxuriæ, quidquid mendacii, immo quidquid vitiorum est comprehendens.” — *Luitprand. Murat. Script. Ital. vol. ii par. 1, p. A. vi.*

‡ “In all money transactions with the Moslems I ever found the strictest honour, the highest disinterestedness. In transacting business with them, there are none of the dirty peculations, under the name of interest, difference of exchange, commission, &c., uniformly found in applying to a Greek consul to cash bills, even on the first houses in Pera.” — *Byron's Works, viii. 128.*

§ Sir Cornewall Lewis, *Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion.* p. 399.

markable circumstance, that during their supernatural dispensation they possessed apparently none of that extraordinary talent which, in the shape of practical ingenuity and singular aptness for the wealth-obtaining employment of civic life, has made them remarkable in their days of degradation and dispersion; and so the Italians, at the time when their character was fast degenerating, began to pride themselves more upon ingenuity than upon any other quality. Lord Macaulay in his brilliant essay on Machiavelli, traces how, while courage and the virtues of brave men remained the point of honour in the other countries, they ceased to be so in Italy, where ingenuity took their place, and became the substitute for everything which we are in the habit of considering a virtue.

In this respect again, the law we have so often noted in other particulars seems to hold good. The veins and nerves which run through a national progress, and of which in effect it is composed, seem to be themselves formed of the confluence and struggle of opposite currents. Thus, in this instance, the progress of a state is marked in its beginning by the point of honour resting in the qualities natural to brave and exalted men. Courage, frankness, hospitality, trustworthiness (within certain limits not always very intelligible to our age), are the virtues of early ages—the only virtues, and they are accompanied by ferocity, clownishness, and illiterate and unreflecting ignorance. Then, as the nation advances, and the democracy becomes more active, rises another current, that of clever and subtle devices, when the end of men is to be ingenious if they can, but in any event dexterous. In the national acme these currents blend, we have for the point of honour courage, frankness, and magnanimity divested of their old brutality, and allied with ingenuity, acuteness, the refinements of a thoughtful training, and the ambition of intellectual eminence. As progress advances, the old current gets fainter and fainter,

the new current usurps its place, and then the ambition of every man is cunningly to outwit his neighbour.

For cunning is the depraved excess of ingenuity, it is the result of ingenuity allowed to work its way without the restraint of noble impulses—the counterfeit of real ability which is produced by the fusion of the two currents. Cunning is the apt remedy of the slave, who, unable or unwilling to compete with his master in straightforward hostility circumvents him by insidious wiles. Trickery is the characteristic of the weaker sex, for the same reason; and it will be found to hold true in all situations, that the weaker the person is the more is he prone to resort to tricks and deception to attain his end; and the less warlike and bold a nation, the more are its statesmen addicted to intrigue, the more is its population distinguished for that quality, which, when well applied is ingenuity, when ill applied, is base cunning. At the time when the Italians had completely attained their character of cowardice (about 1502), came into vogue that dastardly policy in which the failure, not the atrocity of the deed, was considered disgraceful.*

The Hindoos, an ingenious and intelligent people, whom we may fairly suppose to have been at one time simple and honest, have, during the long stationary despotisms under which they have lived since the Mahomedan conquest, been distinguished for greediness, treachery, and servility, mingled with quick observation, dexterity, and industry, and are said to speak as a matter of course, of the greater love of truth and mutual dependence among the individuals of the Western nations.†

What a spectacle is this! The intellectual qualities, when combined with good morals, enable a nation to take the foremost rank and advance humanity, but remain, after good morals are gone, and with them pre-

* Macchiavelli, *Istor. Fior.* lib. vi.

† Lieber, *Pol. Ethics*, ii. 8.

eminence—remain but to convert a nation of men into a nation of devils.

If we examine the ingenuity and intelligence of fallen nations, they are found to exercise themselves almost entirely in practical details and the application of science to the common economy of life ; poetry and the other finer kinds of literature, the creations of aristocracy, have no place among such nations ; neither are there artists fit to form a classical school of painting ; for great painters find their only patrons in a fresh, a tasteful, and a liberal plutocracy ; nor are there men of scientific discovery, thoughtful and original, these flourish only in stirring and progressive times. The professed men of intellectual occupations are only academic cultivators of what are called the exact and natural sciences, men who may put former discoveries in good order, and expound neatly the rough thoughts of former ages. Immediate and sordid utility is the end of all their efforts, and if estimated by comparing these professors of intellect with the men of genius in other stages of national progress, this age of stationary despotism would, as it deserves, take but the lowest place, among social stages*, but it is distinguished above all others by the universal spread of ingenuity. In the refined aristocratic ages, a nation contains a few noble and refined men, and a still smaller number of men of genius ; but the mass is clownish,

* M. Chateauxvieux (*Lettres écrites d'Italie en 1812, 1813, p. 8*) says : “ Les arts et la poésie ont cessé en même temps d'être un objet de culte pour les Italiens : ils sont totalement négligés par les hommes de talent. On ne tourne plus ses talens que vers les sciences et les connaissances politiques. L'Italie compte aujourd'hui un grand nombre d'hommes dont les noms sont devenus célèbres dans toutes les branches des sciences exactes et naturelles. Mais nous n'osons pas parler des tableaux faits par les trois uniques peintres dont le nom soit connu L'impulsion générale qu'on remarque maintenant se dirige ainsi loin des régions de l'imagination, vers l'esprit d'ordre et d'arrangement dans les affaires, vers le désir d'améliorer sa situation par l'intelligence et l'économie, vers un désir enfin d'employer ses forces à des choses dans l'ordre social et particulier.”

unintelligent, inapt at learning. In the later age, even of the fallen nations, all men are more dexterous, more ready at catching new ideas, and putting them in practice ; but the men of genius are extinct.

By such means the character of the nations which have passed the point where progress ceases, becomes in a manner fixed, admitting no change except the slow process of decay. The power of devising great inventions and making great theoretical discoveries has, as I have noted, perished when despotism supervenes, but after despotism has long been established we can even trace how the habit of applying science to the daily wants of life wears out, and men imitate the shifts of their ancestors without caring to improve them, retaining the practice of civilisation, but losing all the theory of science and all knowledge of the reasons which led to the practices they imitate. This is the state to which China*, the oldest of despotisms, is reduced. It is full of ingenious devices and crafty inventions, but they have been stereotyped for ages, and the Chinamen of our day, with no lack of cunning and roguery, and that sort of quick understanding which so often passes for intelligence, add nothing to their traditional store of mechanical contrivances.

As far as the internal arrangements of such countries are concerned, our rule might be *Guardáre e passáre* ; but as they manifestly affect the conditions and power of other nations, it becomes necessary to consider the manner and the degree in which they do so.

The more there are of these sluggish worn-out nations, and the fewer there are of the active advancing nations, the greater is the opportunity for the sovereign of a warlike and healthy people to realise the dream of Universal Monarchy. This reflection explains how it is that at times in the world's history there are no great and overwhelming powers, while others seem the ages of

* De Tocqueville, *Dém. en Amér.* iii. 91, 92.

Great Empires. If there is but one great and flourishing kingdom on the face of the earth, and all around are turbulent and unsettled tribes, or the effete possessors of civilisation, that nation which is most warlike and at the same time most organised, has it manifestly within its power to become a sovereign people, powerful in territory and in the crowds of tribute nations, like the Babylonian kingdom.

The nucleus of these kingdoms, wherever they arise, is a warlike tribe headed by an ambitious sovereign. They form their sovereignty on the violation of feeble nationalities, with Fear for their ruling principle, and they extend their territory and the crowd of their subject races according to the strength of their own warriors and the weakness of those around them. The Babylonian kingdom, held forth to our abhorrence in Scripture; the proud monarchy of Assyria, with its captive tribes still kneeling before it on those old marbles of Nineveh; the crowds that followed Xerxes as their lord; the tribute-payers of Macedon; the degenerate Greeks and Asiatics, over whom Sylla threw the Roman yoke; each of these agglomerations formed one of those great but not enduring kingdoms that can arise only when the face of the world is crowded with the children of effete civilisation. In the expedition of Xerxes against Greece it is striking and instructive to observe that the warriors who marched like freemen, and on whom the sovereign relied, were native Persians, a people semi-barbarous, who even had no written character of their own, and had borrowed that of the Assyrians. In their train, impelled by the lash of the Persians, came the clever Phœnicians and the artistic Egyptians. By the forced labour of those captive artisans were achieved the canal at Mount Athos and the bridge across the Hellespont. To all the great engineering works required in Xerxes' march, the Persians contributed only by compelling the subject contingents.*

* Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, v. 28.

Again, the expedition of Xerxes, as compared with the expeditions of Alexander and the Romans against the same nation, shows how much the success of the invaders depends upon the social phase of the invaded. Xerxes led the Phœnicians and the Egyptians in his captive train, and hoped to make himself master of the only other civilised nation. He failed. Alexander met with more, though not complete success. After his time the Macedonians became gradually Hellenised, and Greece looked to Macedon to supply it with functionaries. The difference being, that at the first invasion the heart of the foremost states of Greece was sound and loyal to freedom; and at the later time of the Macedonian invasion was so corrupt as to be bought by the Macedonians' gold, and to acknowledge them as the only fit rulers. So Rome repelled Camillus, not Alaric; Venice repelled the Turks, not the French and the Austrians. The Low Countries repelled Louis XIV., not the armies of the Republic; England repelled Napoleon. We have yet to know our conqueror.

In the history of modern Europe there have been ambitious monarchs, ill-studying history, who inflamed with the recorded deeds of Alexander and the Roman empire have essayed to imitate them. They have not perceived that the nations around them, unlike the abject Phœnicians and Egyptians or the corrupted Greeks, were full of brave and simple hearts, who cherished freedom more than wealth. They have learnt when too late that a fresh and healthy nation, poor though it may be, and fruitless like a young holly, allows no one to touch it unwounded, while as they grow older nations draw in their spears, and the tall tree with its spreading branches and its dropping berries is less formidable to the assailant than the young and prickly shrub.

The Spaniards could succeed only in Italy because the cultivated states of that peninsula, as they were the first to start the civilisation of revived Europe, so they were

the earliest to sink under enervation and decay. Napoleon's lot was cast in the times when the feebleness of nations was conspicuous elsewhere than in Italy. Under the banners of his French generals he could therefore collect a host not unlike in form that of the Persian*, and like the Persian he was at last repelled because he attacked nations whose sons had a stout and determined spirit, neither enervated by the business and the idleness of luxury, nor so subdued by former conquerors (as was often the case in Charlemagne's † subject provinces) as to care little for a change of masters.

The principle on which these Babylonian kingdoms are founded is rigid centralisation. So soon as they deviate from that they fall to pieces, as did Alexander's empire when it was partitioned among his generals, as did Charlemagne's after the central tie was broken by his death, and as Turkey must do (and has done as far as Egypt is concerned), when its pashas become independent of the Porte. Now the consequence of the rigid centralisation by which alone they are sustained, is that all the wealth of the country is drawn to the government. Scarce anything else is left to the conquered cultivators than provision for the bare necessities of life. The sovereign not only makes the public functionaries, but he likewise makes the few rich men who are found in such a country, and as he makes so he can also unmake. The large tribute exacted by the sovereign and his creatures gives them a show of riches out of proportion with the general possessions, and this, as Mr. Mill remarks‡, has led to the common belief of the great opulence of Oriental nations. Two results follow from the fact of all the sur-

* Napier, *Peninsular War*, i. 5.

† Charlemagne's kingdom does not belong strictly to the class of these later kingdoms, because the populations of which it was formed were in general not corrupt, but it was created rather by the agglomeration of feudal baronies than by actual conquests over nations, and at that time the serfs cared little about a change of masters.

‡ *Political Economy*, i. 14, sqq.

plus produce thus flowing to the central treasury. First the luxury in which the rulers indulge, and the consequent raising up of a class of ingenious artisans who minister to their luxury. Secondly, the great command of human labour * possessed by the sovereign, who, by the enormous tribute pouring in to him, is able to feed large gangs of workmen, while they produce monuments, embankments, canals, and roads, and other public undertakings, of a vastness unattainable by the elected head of a feudal aristocracy.

And thus, though they are often but shortlived themselves, these great empires leave the most enduring monuments. The palaces of Nineveh, the canal of Nebuchadnezzar, the Pyramids of Egypt and its Lake Mœris, the city of Heliopolis, the great roads of the Moguls in India, and of the Romans in Europe, Napoleon's passes over the Alps; these are records on the earth's surface which it blunts old Saturn's scythe to cut against.

* Grote, Greece, iii. 401.

CHAP. XXVIII.

PUBLIC HAPPINESS.

“How shall we mortals spend our days?”—*Old Song.*

“La nature a donné à tous les hommes le droit d'être heureux.”—*Turgot.*

THE happiness of his nation has engaged the solicitude of everyone who has deserved to be ranked as a statesman. But ill-observing the differences and the changes in national progress, and the consequent diversity of the means necessary for promoting public happiness, they have acted like physicians who should have but one prescription for the old and young alike.

In what does public happiness consist? Is it in liberty? Then the times of greatest discontent are the times of the greatest happiness, for the times of greatest and most active discontent are the times of greatest liberty.* Is it

* Lord Mahon (Hist. of Eng. i. 3), after noticing the discontents which prevailed in the prosperous period of English history, says:—“To such an extent, in fact, have these outcries proceeded, that a very acute observer has founded a new theory upon them; and far from viewing them as evidence of suffering, considers them as one of the proofs and tokens of good government:—‘J’ai toujours trouvé que le meilleur gouvernement est celui contre lequel on crie le plus fort sur les lieux mêmes: et il suffit de citer l’Angleterre et les États-Unis d’Amérique; car cela prouve que l’on a l’œil sur ceux qui dirigent les affaires, et qu’on peut impunément censurer leurs mesures.’”—*Sismondi, Voyage*

in material prosperity? Then America is the most happy of nations, a nation whose citizens are proverbial for a constitutional wretchedness which takes away the worth of living, and even life itself. Is it in a peaceful plodding industry? Then the Chinaman is the most happy of beings; he is always busy and employed, and his thoughts and aspirations, if unofficial, never rise higher than the steam of his domestic dunghill. Yet is China a happy country?

True happiness does not consist in any one of these blessings, but is produced by the temperate exercise of every faculty, bodily and mental, with which nature has gifted us. We are a mass of complicated machinery, and if one section of the machinery, however small, is left wholly unused, or is not used enough, it rusts, and its rusting makes us unhappy; while great and continued use will bring another section of the machinery to more than its usual development, and this, when it becomes excessive, destroys the equilibrium of the whole; and so is as great a cause of unhappiness as the other.

Of men, therefore, those are more happy whose situation in life leads naturally to the moderate exercise of all the physical and mental faculties. Among nations, the happiest are those where each man with moderate toil obtains his daily bread by various occupations, and performs for himself the greater part of the necessary offices of life, with leisure sufficient to make him exercise, by way of amusement, those powers, bodily and mental, which are not required for the provision of his maintenance.

Here are a few testimonies of travellers to which the observation or the reading of every one could supply

d'Italie, tom. ii. p. 286. A still more celebrated Genevese, M. de Sismondi, makes a similar observation in his essay, *sur l'élément aristocratique*. The observation is only partially true. There is more sound of discontent in times of liberty, because then only is it of use to make complaints. Complaints are not made when it is useless to make them.

abundant corroboration. Of a certain tribe in Syria:—"Il me semble que pour rendre l'homme le moins malheureux qu'il est possible, il faut lui désirer une position égale à celle de ces Montagnards, où il ne puisse se procurer que le nécessaire mais avec abondance. Il faut aussi qu'il n'y parvienne que par un léger travail des mains, qui, sans l'affaiblir, entretienne son corps dans un exercice qui le rende robuste. Ce travail écarte la mollesse et le besoin de toutes ces superfluités, qui ne deviennent nécessaires qu'aux hommes sensuels et oisifs, il ne faut pas même que les hommes puissent regarder l'oisiveté comme le terme et la récompense de leurs travaux, et il leur est utile qu'une moyenne rétribution à leur fatigue les mette dans le cas de continuer leurs travaux, pour s'assurer une honnête nécessité. L'âme acquiert plus de nerf, lorsque le corps est robuste, et fait aux exercices journaliers et pénibles, et l'homme laborieux goûte mieux que tout autre les plaisirs purs et permis qui sont le délassement de ses fatigues."*

Of the Dalecarlians in Sweden, Joseph Marshall says, "All the purchases they have to make with money are some parts of their clothing, which is extremely coarse and cheap, and also utensils and implements, all which are bought of travelling pedlars; for I do not apprehend there are three shops for buying them in this immense province. As their money is sufficient, therefore, for their wants, these being all the uses for it except some very slight taxes, they have very few instances among them of unhappiness on account of the want of money; nor do I anywhere remember seeing a people that had more appearance of perfect content and happiness among them. They are blessed with an almost uninterrupted flow of health, which is owing to the hardiness of their lives, attended with wholesome diet. A bolder, braver, hardier race of men, I apprehend do not exist than the

* Voyage autour du Monde, par Pages, i. 376.

Dalecarlians ; indeed, manhood in all the active vigour of undaunted courage, attended with a proportionable degree of strength, is never found but among the mountaineers.”*

Of the Arabs, Sir William Jones says, “Except when their tribes are engaged in war they spend their days in watching their flocks and camels, and in repeating native songs, which they pour out almost extempore, professing a contempt for the stately pillars and solemn buildings of the cities, compared with the natural charms of the country and the coolness of their tents. Thus they pass their lives in the highest pleasure of which they have any conception, in the contemplation of the most delightful objects, and in the enjoyment of perpetual spring.”

“If there be a happy class of people in Europe,” says Mr. Laing, “it is the Norwegian bonder. He is the owner of his little estate He has also variety of labour, which is, perhaps, among the greatest enjoyments in the life of a labouring man ; for there is recreation in change. His distant seater, his woodcutting for fuel, his share of the fishery in the neighbouring river or lake, give that sort of holiday work which is refreshing.”† The Norwegian bonder is, in fact, employed exactly in the same way as More’s Utopians, who blended agriculture and manufactures, so that every man, besides taking his share in the cultivation of the soil, employed some portion of his time at handicraft arts and the employments connected with building ; every family was to make its own clothes, and no person to work more than six hours a day.

These are all of them persons who are happy because their occupations are such as to develope, with a certain degree of equality, the better qualities of the mind and body. They are clearly distinguishable from the *Lazzaroni* of Naples who can earn a miserable living with less

* Marshall’s Travels, 1773, ii. 337.

† Laing’s Norway, pp. 331, 332.

trouble than is necessary to exercise them healthily, and whose leisure is employed not in wholesome mental occupation, however rude or trifling, but in begging, gambling, and cursing. All their bad qualities, bodily and mental, are developed largely at the expense of their good qualities.

The proverbial happiness of a cottage consists in the opportunity afforded by that sort of life for this wholesome and equal exercise which I have been praising. You do not like a cottage life if it is that of a brickmaker, or a hodman, or a factory artisan, but the self-supporting cottage life, where the out-door labours of the garden and the field are diversified with the in-door occupations, with song and mirth and jollity, like the cottager's life in Norway and in some parts of England. Upon this the townsman, half of whose mind and body are developed at the expense of the other half, dotes with fond longing.*

Now this Arab tribe or Norwegian bonder life, is the life of the earliest stage of nations. It lasts unchanged till the primitive conquest by which an aristocracy is founded introduces the first division in labour. The tillage of the ground devolves exclusively on the conquered; the defence of the barony and the kingdom devolves exclusively on the lord and those whom he may summon to his assistance. This is no unhappy state of things, for there is sufficient diversity left to the conquered people to occupy their every faculty; and as for their conquered condition, the minds of the peasants soon accommodate themselves to that, if their lords are frank and generous, and live among their subjects.

But if the nation advances along the line of national progress, it must gradually acquire one of the chief and indispensable requisites to that progress, viz. the increased division of labour. Professions, trades, manufac-

* See Burton's *Life of Hume*, i. 348.

tures, and subdivisions among professions, trades, and manufactures, increase proportionately as the nation advances from the early to the later stages of development. The individuals of whom the nation consists find it necessary to cultivate some one or two of their faculties exclusively. Theoretically this tends to unhappiness; but as human nature is not equal, and there are scarcely two persons who, whether by inheritance or by some early accident, have not a disposition to exercise particular faculties in preference to others, the division of labour, when carried to a moderate extent, is not immediately onerous. The old poet, for instance, is divided into all the several classes of literature. This division of labour does not necessarily tend to the unhappiness of those who thus narrow their field of labour. The ancient priest is drawn out into the modern clergyman, the metaphysician, the schoolmaster, the lawyer, the secular bookworm, even the medical man. I do not know that it follows that any of these classes of men, if they have a proper diversity of occupation, are necessarily more unhappy than the priest of early ages who, in a rude way, performed all their functions. But I do think that it makes a man unhappy to be all his days confined to the making of pin's heads, or to be a "minder and piecer" during ten hours, and too tired during the other fourteen to exercise any other faculties than those of eating, drinking, and sleeping; and I say, therefore, without hesitation, that the division of labour tends to unhappiness, and when excessive produces a very great degree of unhappiness.

The writings of medical men are replete with the description of diseases peculiar to particular trades or professions; that is, diseases induced by the undue cultivation of some one faculty of the body and the neglect of others. These are obvious causes of the destruction of that tranquillity which is essential to happiness. Again, the cultivation of the mind, without due exercise of the body, produces a distinct and familiar class of diseases affecting

sedentary persons. Thus Ariosto, if he had been a simple bonder, might have escaped the death which, in 1532, was attributed to the severe and sedentary application to his "*Orlando Furioso*." Others, instead of shortening their bodily, destroy their mental lives, and by the cultivation of some one faculty of the mind at the expense of all others, become lunatics.

This is why genius is so near akin to madness. Survey the madhouse of history. In the chamber of the most strictly guarded, the most heavily ironed, and the most hopelessly insane grovel the creatures that have attained immortality, by cultivating their imagination in unwholesome solitude, and by debarring themselves not merely from the exercises which keep the body in health, but from the pleasures of society, and from that variation in mental exercise, that occasional change in the current of thought, whereby alone the tranquillity, and therefore the happiness of the mind, are preserved. Why is genius before it is mad eccentric, but because functions ordinarily exercised by other persons are kept inert till they die paralysed. The man of genius is absent, because in the depth and fervour of his creative thought, he has stopped the play of those faculties by which men in society keep themselves alive to the presence of their neighbours; and when they want to use these perceptive faculties, it requires an enormous effort to bring the rusty machinery to work again. Why did Johnson stand fumbling for several minutes before a clock without being able to tell the hour, as any whistling apprentice might have done in a moment, but because he had cultivated the creative and contemplative powers of his mind so much more than the apprentice, that he had deadened the perceptive faculties which he once had in common with the apprentice. So Newton, by exclusive culture of the analytic faculty, had rendered himself incapable of enjoying the beauty of poetry, which would have been felt by children and comparatively ignorant persons, and had so

unevenly exercised his mental faculties, that at last he became what the world calls mad. The German recluses read and think themselves into Greeks, or into mediævalists, or into moody theologians, and presently become deadened to the world around them, and go about as somnambulists, till, as is very frequent, they retire to the lunatic asylum.

The retired tradesman dies of ennui, because brought up from early boyhood to his trade, he has developed only those faculties of his mind required for it, and has deadened all the others. He cannot, when he has retired, recall to activity those benumbed faculties, and having no longer occasion to keep in use the faculties which are not rusted, they soon rust like the rest, and he decays like an unused machine in a lumber room.

The man who in early life has had what is called a liberal education, which means that more faculties of his mind have been developed than those merely required for his profession, can, when he abandons his profession, fall back upon the exercise of these other mental faculties, and therefore dies not so readily of ennui.

The devoteeism of the mind is that which can be most easily aroused without much previous cultivation. In fact, it is always kept in some degree of activity, and therefore, minds which are barren and destitute of faculties, are those most readily excited by a sudden fury of fanaticism. A methodist preacher making his way into a factory or village, obtaining a hearing from men who have never cultivated any mental faculty at all, and only the few bodily ones necessary for their craft, can speedily send these operatives to the lunatic asylum by working on their religious feelings, developing those feelings solely, and thus overthrowing that equilibrium of mind which formerly existed in almost non-development of any faculty. Religious fanaticism is a morbid affection of the imaginative qualities of the mind, and seizes hold most easily of those who have not duly exercised and kept

in order their imaginations. Thus in artisans and small traders certain faculties of the mind are developed, but the imagination not at all; and this powerful faculty lies dormant, craving for a field of exercise till some accident arouses a spirit of devoteeism, and then the whole pent-up force of the imagination breaks down its dyke and floods the distempered mind. This is the true secret of the success of the "Religious Revivals" in America, and their effect in populating the lunatic asylum.

Of the highly educated classes, the mathematician is the most addicted to the madness of fanaticism. Why? Because of all high intellectual employments mathematics alone requires no exercise of the imagination. Poets who exercise their imaginations more than any other class, are the worst mathematicians, and, as a rule, mathematicians hate poetry.* The mathematician's definition of poetry, prose run mad, was not said for love of epigram, but as a real opinion; and among the mathematicians with whom I have been acquainted, I have observed that the greater their skill and love for mathematics, the less, as a general rule, they exercise their imaginations. The want of a healthy exercise of the imagination may be observed strikingly in those who take high mathematical degrees at Cambridge, though they are not always instances to be relied on, as the imagination may often have been largely cultivated before they took to reading mathematics, and its exercise continued during their mathematical studies. But great mathematicians, who devote their lives to this study, pre-

* In one respect the mathematician resembles the poet, as Montucla (*Hist. des Mathém.* i. 151) has remarked. Each is possessed by an impulse of nature, which, on the first opportunity, leads the individual to devote himself for life to gratifying his genius—that is, both the poet and the mathematician are possessed with an irresistible desire to cultivate one faculty of the mind at the expense of all others. Both mathematicians and poets become therefore unhappy, for want of an equal development and exercise of the mental faculties.

sent the most striking examples of defective imagination, and instances are not wanting of religious fanaticism seizing hold of them and driving them to insanity.*

Clergy ignorant of all but their breviary are always the most fanatical, because they have no other faculties developed except the religious. Clergy who have in youth been trained in other studies beside theology, do not in later life allow devoteeism such absolute and complete sway over their minds, as if that alone had been the nurture of their youth. Celibate clergy, in like manner, having nothing to think of or attend to but their profession, are more active in advancing the interests of the church than a country parson with twelve children and three acres of glebe.

Statesmen of the school of David Hume, who think a clergy a necessary evil, and wish them to be as inactive as possible, would bribe their indolence by allowing them to marry and distract their energies by liberal studies; as the ancients, desiring that their slaves should be wholly devoted to their service, made them eunuchs, thinking that by preventing the distractions of a family, the slaves would be more faithful to their masters,—an opinion which seems not to have been erroneous.†

It is indeed a general observation, that the possession of a family prevents more attention being bestowed upon the professional object of life than is required for mere financial purposes. It contributes to the happiness of the individual on that very account, as it affords an exercise for many of the best feelings and faculties of human nature, which would most likely be otherwise undeveloped; but in doing so it breaks in upon the principle of the division of labour, which says, Let domestic sym-

* See in particular the instance of Waring, and Dugald Stewart's observations on it. *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, chap. i. sect. 3 (ii. 291.)

† Xen. *Cyrop.* vii. 5, §§ 60-5. And see the authors cited by Lewis, *Observ. and Reasoning in Politics*, ii. 102.

pathies and affections be the exclusive field of A, let the composition of poetry be the sole employment of B, let the chiselling of marble exhaust all the energies of C, let the faithful service of his master be the only thought of D, let the statesman know of nothing but the state, debar him of private life, its joys, its affections, its duties,—and this ruthless principle of the division of labour speaks the true key to greatness. The men who have achieved the highest efforts of the intellect have nearly all lived alone in the world*—that is, till they joined the social circle in the lunatic asylum. Newton, Swift, Pope, Bolingbroke, Comte, Washington Irving, and Macaulay died bachelors; Bacon was childless; on Sir Joshua Reynolds being told by Flaxman of his marriage, he only anticipated a result fairly deduced by historical induction, when he said, “Oh, then you are ruined for an artist,”—a result falsified in that instance by the great energy of Flaxman, who did not allow the cares of his family seriously to interfere with his devotion to his profession. It may also be noted that men of great mental power, frequently marry the most idiotic of women. The reason is manifest, and was given by a great statesman, who had done so; when a friend remarked the silence of his wife, who was too imbecile to conduct a common conversation, he answered, “She never troubles me.” He was left to pursue his own thoughts and occupations without the distraction of attention which an intelligent wife would cause.

It were doing no good service to human improvement, and to “production,” not merely of cotton and iron-goods, but of the great intellectual works which have made nations famous, to dissuade ambitious men with some

* “Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, which, both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public.”—*Bacon's Essay on Marriage*.

special bent in their minds, from cultivating solely the track which their youthful inclination points out to them ; though such dissuasion were the greatest kindness to the individual, saved thereby from the deplorable misfortune of being a great man.

There are, however, many ways of being unhappy without being great, but they all arise from the same general causes—unequal development and unemployed faculties, which, like healthy juices, become poisonous by being repressed. The factory operative is unhappy because some of his physical powers are developed in a narrow and exclusive manner. The American citizen is unhappy, because, developing some of the least worthy of the mental faculties, he deprives his physical and his better mental powers of their due employment. The Americans never ride, or take a country walk, or enjoy field-sports or contests of strength. Their only exercise is travelling in steam-carriages and boats, their only gymnastics the waltz and the galop. Their amusements consist in smoking, gaming, and other indoor dissipation.* The muscular energy thus deprived of its natural vent has brought on that most singular and ridiculous habit which was never heard of but in America, of whittling away with a carving knife at any piece of wood near at hand, while their legs are restlessly intruding upon the table, or dangling over the back of a chair. It is strange that they do not perceive, from this uncontrollable desire for movement on the part of the arms and legs, that their business-occupations do not afford sufficient work for faculties which thus seek an absurd exercise, and that it is therefore a duty to choose such amusements as shall best afford employment to the faculties otherwise undeveloped. The amusements of a counting-house prisoner should be open air, vigorous exercise, just as hunting, shooting, and fishing, are the amusements of our seden-

* See, among other witnesses, Baxter's *America*, pp. 98, 99. *

tary statesmen, lawyers, and merchants. Indoor intellectual amusements are good for those whose occupations involve great bodily exercise, but bad for those who are working their heads all day. Dr. Franklin hit the distinction when he said that chess was a suitable evening amusement for the man whose days are spent in active bodily exertion, and a mischievous supererogation for the mind which is constantly in exercise on other things.

But not to multiply examples where the conclusion is plain. Every occupation or habit which tends to the development of one quality or a few qualities, and the repression of others, tends to destroy that tranquillity and equilibrium which are essential to health and happiness. The division of labour makes the occupations of individuals more narrow and limited, and therefore develops more largely a single faculty at the expense of others. There are, however, different degrees of unhappiness dependent on the different nature of the faculties developed. It is happier, for instance, to have the more noble qualities of the mind developed, and to use them, as is the case with a man of genius or of science, even though that development and exercise of noble qualities be at the expense of the other faculties used by ordinary men; it is more unhappy to have none but the most mechanical and worthless faculties developed and used, as is the case with the ordinary "minders and piecers;" and it is most unhappy of all to have naturally developed fine and noble faculties, but to have no means of using them, and to be compelled to exercise for daily bread the lowest and most mechanical. This is the fate of the chartist poets and socialist orators, men who often display the finest talents, miserably checked and oppressed; and always impress me, judging both from their physique and their writings, with the idea that they are the unhappiest of men.

Now, in the earlier ages of national existence, labour is very little divided. Every man in those ages has a

variety of occupations, and does not devote himself with great or exclusive energy to any one narrow craft. There is consequently a natural facility for maintaining the active equilibrium of the human faculties. National progress rests in great measure upon the division of labour, for up to a certain point in that progress it is true that the more advanced is the stage of the progress, the more is labour, bodily and mental, divided into minute tracks.

The appreciation of this fact gives the key to an important political effect. In early ages we hear nothing of governments providing amusement for the people. A jovial sovereign may haply like to join in the rustic sports of his people, and infuse a little regal pomp into them, and thus many a pageant and show is devised or countenanced by a kind and merry monarch. But all this is accidental, and rather resulting out of the overflow of good-nature and joviality than as any part of the regal office. But in later ages the government makes it a settled and serious purpose to provide for the amusement and education of the people. It does this often from a rude kind of instinct, in the same way as parents buy toys and story books, without entering into a serious moral reflection on the duty or expediency of amusing and instructing their children.

But reflection would fully confirm them in their policy. If it is true that the division of labour lessening the number of faculties developed in each individual tends to his unhappiness, it is equally true that no man who is unhappy and unhealthy is so good a subject as when he is happy and in health. Every man, says Johnson, is a rascal when he is sick ; and it is certain that none have such evil views of human nature as those men of genius who have disordered the just equilibrium of their minds by studying too hard in one particular track, and no subjects are more restless and prone to concoct diabolical

schemes of destruction, than those who are unhealthy in mind or body, or both.

The unhappiness of later ages arises from two causes—physical evil and undeveloped or impartially developed minds. Statesmen of the “paternal” schools, who have to deal with nations arrived at the stage when tranquillity is above all things desirable, address their attention to providing for the happiness of the individual even at the risk of impairing the productiveness and the wealth of the country. The Italian writers on politics, who always speak of the prince and the minister as the tutors of the people, and as belonging to a body apart from the governed, and requiring a distinct professional education, inculcate upon the paternal functionaries the duty and expediency of providing above all things for the public happiness. They are justified in this by their political situation; for since the time of Machiavel, who founded the school of positive politics, a large part of the population of the prominent states of Italy has had need of the assistance of their governments to improve their happiness. Writing amid populations which are in this condition of unhappiness and malevolence, Italians have not unnaturally expressed their surprise at the political economists of England (too often mistaken for statesmen) who merely regard how much wealth is to be produced, and leave the happiness of the producers Providence’s care.

The difference is caused by the fact that when the school of political economists arose in England to teach town life, the division of labour, and its merits, labour was little divided, town life and its minute occupations little in vogue, and the people comparatively happy. Italy, on the contrary, had long known the stage when labour is much divided, town-life common, and the population pressing hopelessly on the means of subsistence, and even has in many parts known the next stage, which

is that when practical and violent remedies for their unhappiness are enforced by the government.

The unhappiness arises from the physical unwholesomeness of occupation, and from a development of the mind always partial and generally bringing out the most mechanical and least improving faculties. The correctives are of two classes. The first and least violent is the forcible education of children. The government, before the children are immured in these unwholesome forcing-houses of particular faculties, keeps them by penal enactments in the free air of general rudimentary education. This is the policy of France, Prussia, and China, and has, to a paternal government, the additional recommendation of enabling the government teachers to inculcate upon the youthful intellect the regulation thoughts and feelings of the government grammar-castle. A second and more violent remedy is found in the legislative restrictions against employers keeping their work-people more than a certain number of hours at their work ; an interference with the liberty of the subject very consonant to a paternal, but little so to a free government.

These are both palliatives to the evils produced by the division of labour, which are consistent with its contemporary extension. A capitalist may be forbidden to keep his workmen more than ten hours, but no law has yet been devised against his narrowing the field of the workman's operations ; a measure he is always taking, because the narrower the field of each individual, the greater the dexterity he will acquire therein, the less the time lost in changing from one sort of employment to another, and, consequently, the greater the quantity of work he will, in a given time, produce. The capitalists urge that the activity of competition does not enable them to regard the effect upon the workman's mind,—that while he is producing more material for his master he is himself becoming a less perfect and more degraded being. Machinery would be a boon indeed to the working

classes, if the workman were allowed to pass in leisure that portion of his time which the machine saves : but if it does not reduce his toil a single minute, but only changes it by making it more narrow and monotonous, I am at a loss to understand how the workman, in his character of producer, is benefited by the inventions in machinery. Mr. Mill's remark seems a just one : "Hitherto it is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being. They have enabled a greater population to live the same life of drudgery and imprisonment, and an increased number of manufacturers to make large fortunes. They have increased the comforts of the middle classes ; but they have not yet begun to effect those changes in human destiny which it is in their nature and in their futurity to accomplish," and which Mr. Mill cautiously avoids specifying.

But as manufactures, whether principally by hand or much assisted by machinery, have a strong tendency, by contracting the field of mental and bodily development to produce unhappiness, something more is required to counteract this tendency, than either the forcible education of children, which necessarily cannot be prolonged far into their growth, or the legislative restriction on factory hours.

The true corrective is the possession by the workman of a taste for liberal and healthy occupations, which shall develop portions of the mind and body left undeveloped by his daily toil, and of the means of gratifying this taste.

This corrective may be either supplied by the workman himself, or supplied by the government. In the Netherlands, in the ages when that country was achieving commercial greatness, the artisans, who earned their daily bread in the large factory gangs, formed themselves in their leisure hours into military sodalities of musketeers, cross-bowmen, archers, and swordsmen ; amusements, which gave them open-air exercise, and called

into play muscles and limbs unused in their factory toil. They formed also, what were called Guilds of Rhetoric, associations of mechanics, who composed poetry, and gave dramatic and musical exhibitions and theatrical shows, — performances, perhaps, of little merit if considered merely in an artistic point of view, but highly laudable and useful in affording, to those who took part in them, exercise for mental faculties, which otherwise had rusted for want of use. I do not know a single objection which could be urged against such institutions, or a single consideration, which would detract from our admiration for a body of free and sturdy artisans, who thus, of their own accord, provided for themselves the very occupations and amusements which, forming the true antidotes to their compulsory employments, preserved an equilibrium in their bodily and mental development, and therefore preserved their happiness.* We never hear of Flemish artisans, in the great days of the Netherlands, emigrating to escape from the misery of factory labour, or demanding a distribution of colonial land to enable them to settle as peasant proprietors. They thus solved the problem of obtaining these antidotes to unhappiness ; and obtaining them by their own energies, they preserved their liberty.

In other countries, blessed with a paternal government, it has been the solicitude of that government to counteract the evils of a monotonous mode of life, by providing state amusements. “*Panem et Circenses*” has been the cry which many a despot since the Roman emperors has sought to anticipate and prevent. They have seldom been wisely chosen ; for the governments pay professional performers to sing, to dance, to act, to fight for the amusement of the populace, rather than encourage that populace to take part themselves in active amusements which would remedy the evils of impartial development of mind or body. Perhaps this is not altogether the fault of the govern-

* See a good account of these Guilds in Motley's *Dutch Republic*, i. 85, *sqq.*

ments ; for when a populace has become so debased as to look to its governors for its amusement, it is probably vain to hope that it could be induced to join in healthy active exercise, which, though it may give happiness, gives trouble * ; and probably the government is led to choose the sort of amusement which it shall give by the cravings of the governed, and these cravings are among a population where mechanical and commercial occupations prevail, where the moral sensibilities are deadened, and romance is banished from life, for something which will call the imagination into action, and in particular for dramatic representations. Because dramatic representations not only arouse the imagination, but those sensibilities of heart whose torpor creates unhappiness. How instructive, and yet how sad it is, in the middle of some pathetic and touching piece to turn from the stage to the audience, and watch the husband who is separated from his wife joining in the joy with which the house sees two lovers married, but not without the deep sorrow of his soul to think that that happiness which they have reached may never more be his ; the mother, who has wept over the grave of all her children, partaking the happiness of the mother-actress restored to her children ; to trace the rigid features of the hard dealer by your side, who never did a liberal action in his life, relax to an unwonted openness, when, in spite of himself, he sympathises with the universal applause at a noble act of self-denying generosity.

Each goes away the better ; for qualities of his mind, which never act in daily life, have been evoked by sympathy. The mighty actor has made him bring out all the

* A writer in *Ed. Rev.* vol. xlv. p. 33, denies the unhealthiness of factory work, because the duration of life has increased since factories have been introduced. Medical men will tell him that unhealthy persons often live longer than healthy ones. The latter are imprudent, and more liable to acute and sudden attacks than those less full-blooded, and by continual ailment made cautious. The more intense and complete the animal organisation, the quicker is often its passage through the stages of life.

unused and rusty portions of his soul, and oiled them for him.

When for want of antidotes, supplied either spontaneously as they should be, or by the government, as they cannot be consistently with a respectable personal liberty, town drudgery and oppression become at length insufferable to their victims, they demand an agrarian law, an actual return to the primitive rudeness of a simple self-supporting cottage life.*

This is the peasant proprietorship of France; this is the colonising system as applied to the mob of the Roman capital †; the life of the backwoodsman, with its varied occupations — the paradise of the fagged townsman, sick of the dreary monotony of his stool in the factory and his slavery to the hard laws of alternation between plenty and want, preferring energy and independence in the company of American Indians to making pins' heads in the interest of civilisation.

Say writes well: "Le sauvage de l'Amérique du Nord regardé nos villes comme de vastes galères, où chaque forçat est contraint à un travail opiniâtre qui (du moins pour le plus grand nombre d'entre eux) ne leur procure qu'une chétive subsistance. Faut-il être surpris qu'il se sauve dans les forêts du moment que l'occasion s'en présente? On n'a point d'exemple qu'un sauvage de l'Amérique du Nord soit venu volontairement s'établir dans une ville des États-Unis. On a de nombreux exemples

* Niebuhr, H. R. iv. 326, 345: and on the assignments of land to soldiers.

† Niebuhr, H. R. v. 150. The demand of the poor was the same in Imperial Rome and in France: but, owing to the Roman states owning large domains, conquered by its armies, a different result followed. The Agrarian laws of Rome related only to the possessions held by the state, they did not provide for the division of the enormous territories which were held by the Roman plutocracy. Heyne's once celebrated tract, in 1793, (Opusc. iv. 350), was designed to point out this distinction between the Agrarian laws of the Romans and the proposed Agrarian law of the French "quâ fortunæ omnium æquarentur."

au contraire, d'hommes élevés dans la civilisation qui ont embracé la vie des forêts ; et si nos villes avaient pour voisines des peuplades de sauvages peut-être devrions nous craindre que de pareils exemples ne fussent bien plus communs." *

Those who, imbued with a disgust of town life and its monotonous and unhealthy occupations, and the degraded position which, in the presence of a crowd of rich, they occupy, settle themselves upon a self-supporting farm, of course carry with them not a few of the habits of the towns from which they emigrate. If they leave towns or villages still enjoying municipal liberty, they, like the English colonists, do not forget the principle of self-government ; if, on the contrary, they, like the French peasant proprietors, were before they settled on their new properties accustomed to centralisation, it is to centralisation that they look as the natural form of government.

They never forget, too, the habits of trade that they have learnt in towns. "The French peasant," says Mr. Mill †, "is no simple countryman, no downright 'paysan du Danube ;' both in fact and in fiction he is now 'le rusé paysan ;'" and the colonist is not like the old Saxon cottagers, or the Norwegian bonders, content to cultivate enough to live by the necessities of life, but seeks by the produce of his extra work to gain wherewith to get capital for speculation, or to buy himself luxuries.‡

There is perhaps no very great necessity to compare the happiness of the earliest stage, as shown in the Norwegian, the Dalecarlian, and in a somewhat different manner, in the Spanish peasant and the Albanian, with that of the latest—the peasant proprietors of France, or

* Cours d'Écon. Polit., ii. 529. Observe the delight of the Dutch boors to roam about at the Cape, and their hatred of settled life, and the habits of French officers in America to retire to the Indian settlements, throw aside their clothing, tattoo their bodies, and become savages. Barrow's Journey in Africa, p. 369.

† Political Economy, i. 345.

‡ Barnum's Autob.

the out-settlers of the United States ; since no individual effort to transfer any people from one stage to the other would succeed, but if the comparison must be made, the conclusion would, I think, not be doubtful. The first, by a moderate exercise of a great variety of functions, obtain enough to satisfy all the wants they feel, and employ their leisure in a kind of current rhapsodical literature, which, while it enables them to convey to each other the result of their observations and reflections, keeps in sufficient activity the imagination and narrative faculties of their minds. The re-ruralised cottagers—if we may so speak—those who have become country-people by revulsion against being townspeople, or living upon their old holdings, have become imbued with the spirit of traffic, have the knowledge of many wants they can never satisfy, the habit of making gains, not by steady plodding industry, but by lucky gambling chance, and the deadness of the imagination which long-continued town-life produces. Their reading is most commonly mechanical, and having a direct reference to money-making ; their end is too often not to live happily and merrily, but to save and invest, that so they may either spend in luxuries, or have whereby to look down upon their neighbours.

There is, of course, a mean between these extremes, which often takes place in this way. Towns might arise in a country inhabited as Norway is now, and in that case, instead of the yeomen giving up their little farms and emigrating into towns, they turn merchants and manufacturers in their cottages, and grow as large a produce as they can, in order to sell to the towns, and with the produce buy luxuries and teach their daughters the fashionable dances. This is very much what has taken place among the lowland Scotch, who, since the sixteenth century, have manifested much of the spirit of “le rusé paysan,” and when want of opportunity has prevented their making profit at home, they, or at least

the younger sons, ambitious to buy little estates for themselves, travel through uncommercial countries as hawkers. The Scotch, for instance, were the pedlars of Poland in the seventeenth century, a country then without any native commerce. The thrifty trading character of the lowland Scotchmen has long been proverbial.

There are many qualities belonging to a peasant-proprietor of this class, which, in comparison with a primitive cottager, or a vassal of the middle ages, command the preference of a political economist. The peasant-proprietor is thrifty and temperate ; he often lives wretchedly in order to save money ; he is calculating in all senses of the term, and is not imbued with a spirit of self-sacrifice. But he is self-dependent, and in his hands not a foot of ground is allowed to lie waste under hedges or commons.

On the other side, the man of a lofty and poetical mind scorns such people for their want of chivalry. He seeks in vain for anything like devotion to a chief, or open-hearted hospitality, for which he would forgive smuggling and brigandage. He declares them to be as niggardly, penurious, and sordid as any small shopkeeper in a great city. They live, says such an objector, with no regard to the beauty or poetry of the country, but think only how much money they can make out of it. They have no ties, he continues, to the hamlet of their birth, or the neighbours of their youth ; but their end being avarice, and their means cunning, if they hear of a good piece of land to purchase in another part of the country, they leave without regret their old haunts, and set up in business upon the new field.*

The change from the old song-loving farmer and cottager, under his rude thatched roof, at the head of happy domestics, to the laborious, luxurious, fastidious, and exclusive life of the present age, has been traced with much

* On the frequent sales of land by the French proprietors, see Mill, *Pol. Econ.* i. 358 ; the same takes place in America.

warm eloquence by one whose poetical mind sympathises with the state of society most productive of song and merriment, rather than that which is most productive of carved furniture, elegant equipages, silks, and spices.*

Whether, as far as mere luxury is concerned, most happiness is produced by living under thatch or under slate, by pressing with the feet plain matting, or velvet pile carpet; by listening to a merry rustic ballad without accompaniment, or the most fashionable polka played on the prize piano—this grave question let those decide who can. I am fain to believe that there is most happiness where there is content with the present situation, whatever that may be, and least where there is both knowledge of and desire for a different situation. "The great source," says a deep thinker, "of both the misery and disorder of human life seems to arise from overrating the difference between one permanent situation and another."† Now in the early stage of national existence, no other situation but that of tribe life or of peasant life is known. When aristocracy is founded by conquest, a new situation is introduced, but one into which the subjects can never so far expect to rise as sincerely to wish to do so. As trade and enlightenment convert this hitherto unscaleable acclivity into a series of steps—the great mass of those who are located upon these steps render themselves miserable in the desire of an ascent, then not so impracticable as to be absurd. A man might think a woman's life preferable to his own, and *vice versâ*; but persons are not fools enough to be unhappy on that account, because they know that to change their sex is impossible. If the change became possible, then alone would the wish to change lead to efforts and a want of tranquillity, whereby unhappiness would be produced.

This is why the Romans of the empire declared that the

* Allan Cunningham; "The Songs of Scotland," Preface, p. 121, *sqq.*

† Smith's Moral Sent. i. 367.

happiest times in their history was when "Paupertas" was not ridiculous—understanding by that word *pau-pertas* the condition of the man who by moderate labour could support himself on his own farm, the condition which in the time of Cato the more ambitious became anxious to change for the first advance towards what was hated by the stern censor as luxury, but what we should not recognise under that name; for it is a trite observation, that as society advances to that state which is called "civilisation" every poor wretch possesses and regards as a necessary of life what was once considered as a luxury, and enjoyed only by the richest and most considerable men.* For what is luxury †, but the possession of sources of pleasure to which no proper pain is opposite? As soon as it becomes painful to see others enjoying these elegancies and refinements, and to be deprived of them oneself, they cease to be luxuries, and become in a measure necessities to happiness. It is manifest how much more difficult it is to attain happiness when what was once luxury has become a necessary.

"Nam quod adest præsto, nisi quod cognovimus ante
Suavius, in primis placet, et pollere videtur;
Posteriorque ferè melior res illa reperta
Perdit, et immutat sensus ad pristina quæque."

Lucret. v. 1411, sqq.

People in an advanced stage of "civilisation," surrounded with these luxuries, yet not deeming them such, but always spending their life in a continual craving for more, look back with a fond regret to the days (and "distance lends enchantment to the view") when in these simple goods there was luxury—when in a humble lot there was content. "Non qui parum habet sed qui plus

* Mandeville Fable of the Bees, Remark (P).

† As the Yorkshire dalesman said, "You see, if a man gets on a high place, he is'n satisfied then; he wants to get higher. So I thinks best to content myself down here."

cupit, pauper est," Seneca told us*; and said d'Aguesseau, writing in the days of that luxurious and profligate aristocracy of France: "Le plus précieux et le plus rare de tous les biens, est l'amour de son état. Il n'y a rien que l'homme connaisse moins que le bonheur de sa condition."

To all this comes in as an antidote peasant-proprietorship. The political effect of peasant-proprietorship, when the greater number of the holders of the landed property of the country are rural citizens, is of course destructive of feudality and incompatible with constitutional monarchy; and thus by tracing a different chord which vibrates through the whole life of nations, namely the love of each individual for varied occupations, and the health and happiness that result from them—a love first rudely checked and controlled by the division of labour, but afterwards vindicating itself against that principle; tracing this, we are brought to the same result, the same social condition of equality which former inquiries had induced us to declare the ultimate condition of nations.

Equality being induced at a late stage of national existence as an antidote to the evil of inequality, it impresses itself upon the national character, differently affected in different countries by the principle of inequality, in the manner, whatever that may be, upon the particular occasion necessary to reinstate a natural equality. Accordingly, in countries where inequalities of rank have once been carried to an absurd and mischievous excess, equality steps in as the promoter of general culture, as the principle which gives to every citizen a certain amount of refinement, knowledge, education; and which provides common amusements, the theatre, music, lectures, and popular science, that may serve as topics whereon all men, whatever their birth, wealth, or occupation, may converse, with equal right to be heard and tolerated.

This species of equality prevails, of course, most among

* Ad Lucil. Ep. xl.

civic populations. It prevails among the cities of Italy and in France. In countries more energetic, more fruitful in the productions of human labour, and not possessing this common table-land upon which all may meet as equals, the professions, trades, and occupations are strongly and indelibly marked upon each individual. In England we can always tell a soldier, a sailor, a tailor, a mechanic, a gentleman, a prostitute—dress themselves how they will; but in Italy and France, and in some parts of Germany, these classes are absolutely undistinguishable when out of their business-costumes. The characters of their several occupations are not so deeply impressed upon their minds and manners but that, when they meet on the common level of educated citizenship, they can throw aside all their differences and be undistinguishably equal. It is an obvious observation that where these distinct characters are so strongly impressed on the minds and manners, the merits and the faults of those characters will be prominently brought out.

The other form of equality, when it comes in as an antidote to the inequality produced by the division of labour and the increase of riches, is the return to varied occupations. Then the great object of each rebel to political economy is to settle on a little farm, and living happily by the moderate and varied exercise of his powers, be free of taskmasters and of the alternations between plenty and want, which those who depend solely upon the state of markets must experience.

This equality is that in which the English settler luxuriates, but it is an equality which also prevails throughout the rural districts of France, and in many parts of Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland: it was, too, the antidote to the dreadful inequality between rich and poor which existed in Rome from the time of the Gracchi.*

* Niebuhr, *Hist. Rom.* iv. 343. See Mill's chapters on Peasant-Proprietors, *Pol. Econ.* book ii. ch. vi. vii.

It is a more natural and healthy equality than that civic mutual tolerance of selfishness and every vice which has been introduced as an antidote of too much class-pride. The reruralized citizen may regain his health in wholesome occupation, may lose somewhat the taint of luxury, and live in a simplicity which cannot but command respect. But yet there is the most marked distinction between nations of reruralized citizens and populations which never having gone through town life have yet become peasant proprietors. Among the former there is established within the state a table-land of tolerance for every moral delinquency which does not violate police-regulations. And these are the consequences :—

Codes of honour—however false and foolish the points of honour—have this good about them, that in exacting obedience to their rules they restrain selfishness. Each man feels himself bound by duty to observe the rules of his class, a duty the more pressing because he who neglects it descends to some lower grade of inequality. In this tolerant equality there are no rules, except that of being selfish oneself and tolerating the selfishness of others. Always to devote the passing moment to sensuality, is the end of life. Politeness of demeanour, such as giving up seats to the fair sex, lifting the hat high off the head, and offering cigars, are the thin and hypocritical disguises of a selfishness which, not having the daring or the wealth to run riot boldly and magnificently, bestows upon itself, as matter of sordid business, a calculated systematic indulgence, a quotidian of pleasant drink, smoking without any particular stint, the cheap luxuries of the café, operas, and novels, not very correct in any sense of the term, and other appliances of enjoyment which need not be recorded. In measuring out to themselves this scant dole of premeditated profligacy, and in tolerating it in others, consists in the view of the “equal” subjects of a despotic master—the “savoir vivre.”

The ages of simplicity and self-restraint are the ages of

religion. The proud and valiant man, accustomed to toils and perils and self-denials, makes, without grudging, his obeisance, and, if necessary, his self-mortification for the glory of the Highest. Exalted himself, he, without envy, acknowledges the still greater exaltation of his Maker. The equal slave, whose consolation is that all are as bad as himself, sometimes goes to mass, though he is half ashamed of doing so. The doors are always open, the cathedral is glittering, warm, and fragrant. He enters at the middle of the service, or when it pleases him, deposits his shins upon the seat of a chair—so much for devotion, while his eyes are free to roam about, gathering pleasure from the glowing paintings, the fairy-coloured light of the aisle, the pretty faces that are beside him; while his ear drinks in the sensual beauty of the rich pealing chaunt, the gay lyric of the opera sung by concealed prima donnas; and he conjures up in his ravished imagination scenes of a gorgeous and splendid paradise, to which his unhallowed spirit shall arrive by suffering the priest to pray for him at this his sacrament of the *savoir vivre*.

The service is not half done. He turns away; it was pleasant, there was something congenial to the refined mind in these ceremonies. The arts which feed the gluttony of the eye and the ear* have been skilfully and beautifully employed, and he is the church's debtor for a joyous reverie and sensations different from those of the café or the theatre; but for belief—pardon him that; belief is for the ignorant, the weak, the women, not for the clever and enlightened monsieur.

And is he happy? He jokes, and lets you know it by his laugh; he has a light debonnaire way about him, a grin plays often among the deep furrows of his haggard countenance:—

* "As the palate feasts upon savoury and sweet, the ear feasts upon melody, and the eye gazes upon light and colour till it aches with pleasure."—*Sidney Smith's Moral Philos.* p. 181.

“ For often must he wear the look of ease,
When grief is at his heart.” *

And that grief arises from two causes—physical unhealthiness produced by his way of living, and a more potent, more dreadful cause,—contempt of himself.

For this species of equality is a mistaken remedy. It may develop more of a man's faculties than are developed in a time and country where the division of labour is carried in industrial matters to an extravagant extent, but it develops all the bad at the expense of the good. The slave scorns himself, and tries by his dissipation to distract his attention from his chains.† To do this he bears upon him for a motto, “Vive la bagatelle!” a light ripple is ever upon the surface, his tongue is tripping over the outside of things, so that if you listen to the garrulous flow, he seems to you as if he talked for very want of thought. He dare not think, for thought might lead to action, which is death; and thought without action would but let flow upon his soul a fresh stream from the waters of bitterness. The paternal government is anxious that he should not think. It is for this that the rulers permit all the sensual vices which are forbidden to other ages and to other countries. It is for this they put every form of vice under state countenance and regulation; it is for this they set free their slave from all the trammels of morality and practical Christianity. It is as if you were to tell your servant that he must eat no meat, but as a compensation he may live in perpetual drunkenness. Persons skilled in the matter say that the horses trained for circus exhibitions, appearing to the spectator to be the most docile of their race, are in reality the most vicious.

* Ap Taylor, Michael Angelo, p. 28.

† “Il faut se défier de la gaieté que montre souvent le Français dans ses plus grands maux; elle prouve seulement que, croyant sa mauvaise fortune inévitable, il cherche à s'en distraire en n'y pensant point; et non qu'il ne la sent pas.”—*De Tocqueville, L'Anc. Reg.* p. 205.

Their natural spirit, broken by perpetual coercion, vents itself in kicks and bites upon the less-punished occasions. So the subjects of despotism, restrained of natural liberty, give vent to their will in vicious indulgences, which are allowed them by their government trainers. In England people may and do write with almost perfect freedom from political or moral restraint. In France and Belgium people are trained in politics but left free in morals, and the consequence is, that they use their freedom in publications, whose attacks on morality and religion would prevent their circulation in England, but procure it abroad.

There is one division in labour from which these equal populations may, it is true, not seldom rebel, but which, after every new rebellion is drawn still wider and more impassable, that is, the division between the governing and the governed, whereon I have elsewhere enlarged enough. Where that division is, and all are equally fit to govern, and all feel themselves to be so, there can be no true happiness among the governed. For to happiness two things are essential, food for present enjoyment and tranquillity.* These governments provide the former, but they cannot provide a true tranquillity. That mock *TRANQUILITAS* which they stamp upon their coins and vaunt in their edicts—that mock tranquillity which is expressed in the Chinese proverb, “Better a dog in peace than a man in anarchy,” is the tranquillity precisely analogous to that produced by the gaoler, who is not a person usually employed for the purpose of providing for the happiness of those upon whom he attends in their tranquil but secluded apartments.

Now admitting, as I think we are bound to do, that the division of labour, if allowed to proceed without palliatives and antidotes, tends to the public unhappiness, considering likewise that the palliatives and antidotes

* Smith, *Moral Sent.* i. 366.

which have been devised by other nations do not produce a state of society which Englishmen would be anxious to transplant to their own soil, there remains for those who would put their shoulder to the wheel of their country's difficulties to devise some new expedient for counteracting the evils of an excessive division of labour, accompanied as it is of course by town life, without superinducing the conditions which a revolution against the division of labour has elsewhere established.

The remedy appears, like so many other great social changes in England, to be devising itself. One cause of the unhappiness is unhealthiness; against this an absolute government would provide by forbidding unwholesome edifices. We, with better regard for the liberty of the subject, establish of our own proper movement model lodging-houses, and leave the workmen of their own proper movement to find out their merits. Whatever slight legislative restriction existed, is directed against those who derive an infamous trade in letting pestilent lodgings.

Another cause of unhappiness is want of evenness of culture. Against this absolutism guards by compelling state education, while the true English statesman, abhorring the principle of compulsion, promotes the same cause by the voluntary system of education. These are the two great palliatives to two great forms of evil consequent on the division of labour. So far as they go they seem unexceptionable.

A third reason why unhappiness is greater in the present than in former ages, arises from the multiplication of what are called "gentlefolks," who are supposed by right of their gentility to despise and scorn their lower brethren. The continental remedy is by investing all with a species of gentility, and spreading through all classes that sort of polite affectation which is the easiest of all to imitate. This little suits the Englishman's sympathies; but there is no reason why, if the richer English

do not desire the same promiscuous sociability as prevails among the equalised nations of the continent, they should vindicate their gentility by feelings little amicable to those below them. There is a mean between patronage and incivility. Those who try may hit it.

Again, the relation between master and workman is one which, if uncounteracted, induces the workman to imagine that he is a mere machine for making his master rich. If once a fashion is set among manufacturers to cultivate towards their workmen something of the feelings and sentiments which the old feudal baron felt for his dependants, much may be done to obviate this most potent cause of unhappiness and degradation. Rich and hospitable manufacturers often invite strangers to see their factory. Would that their invitation rather was to see their factory people; and that in the health and happiness of those who provide their fortunes, lay the pride of the employer! In this manner the persons who produce would, though not perhaps in kind, yet in effect consume. I can see no reason why to have thriving employées, should be a less just source of pride than to have a thriving tenantry. The duties of the landed proprietor have long been recognised, and we may justly say largely fulfilled in England. It is for the capitalist now to repel the accusation, that the possession of mere money involves no duties, and that the factory is a palace of selfishness. He has it in his power to do so, if he would think a little less of his town mansion, and his decorated furniture, his gallery of paintings, and his winter gardens; and rather let his charities flow straight to the individuals who are connected with him in trade, than find their way in ostentatious sums to a well advertised subscription list. Personal charity adorns and elevates both giver and receiver; legal and official charity is given grudgingly by unknown abstractions to other unknown abstractions, and the people who take it, take it with the feeling that by taking it they enrol themselves in the pariah caste.

There is this excuse to be urged for the past conduct of manufacturers—that at one time trade was to some extent despised, and to partake in it, or to have risen from the trading class, was considered derogatory. The natural effort of the successful trader or manufacturer was therefore to have as little connection as possible with his business, and to show that in elegance of taste and in power to promote public objects he was no inferior to the great landlord who affected to despise him. Happily the necessity of vindicating the respect due to honest industry, not the less honourable because successful—exists no longer, and with it should cease the habits which the manufacturers have acquired of spending their profits away from the place where they make them. You will even see a great factory owner, who pinches his workmen's wages to the lowest figure, pass his evenings and holidays on some country estate, where he acts the charitable and peasant-relieving land-owner. But let him turn his benevolence and liberality upon his factory, and then we should hear less of socialism, and the demoralisation of money-making, and the hard-heartedness of capitalists. Instead of the great employer subscribing his hundreds to some huge charitable institution, where the money is distributed by grudging and unfeeling officials, who make their living by dispensing charity, let him take his factory people down to his country estate for a week's holiday at a time, or establish at least a few cottages for those who are sick and need change of air, or are too old to work, or are thrown out of employment by a temporary slackness of work, and then our hospitals would be less full, our population more happy, our moneyed-men more respected, and the hated governmental interference less necessary to be invoked.

There is no country in the world where this relation between employer and employed could be so easily introduced as in England, because already we have the combination, unknown elsewhere, of the characters of seigneur

and man of business in the same men ; we want but one step further, that these same men should not show themselves different in the factory and in their country estates. Is it too sanguine to hope that that step may soon be taken, and that the factory owner, who neglects the happiness of his work-people, will become in public estimation even more contemptible than an absentee Irish landlord of the last generation ?

The objector may say, that this plan would destroy the independence of the work-people, and that to their independence their happiness is necessary. But what is meant by this word independence ? We are not proposing that workmen should enter into a contract with their employer to serve him for evermore, and in return that the master should be bound, like the old feudal noble, to provide a home for the workman, aid for his sickness, a pension for his old age, and provision for his widow and infant children ; though it may be doubted whether such reciprocity of duties were likely to produce more or so much unhappiness as what arises from the present system * ; but our proposition is, that as matter of spontaneous kindness, the master should do all those things for men who have served him well, and have responded to his former acts of kindness. The dependence of the factory man at the present day is greater

* " So far from considering their condition of *leibeigenschaft* (serfdom) very miserable, there was great repugnance and opposition, rising almost to revolt among them (the German proletaries), to its abolition in the territories in which it was most rigorous—in Holstein and Schleswig, and other parts of the north of Germany. Labour is a kind of money in the hands of the labouring man, and they saw no advantage, but the contrary, in changing this money into coin to be paid to their masters for rent, and to make provision themselves for sickness, old age, their widows and infants in case of death, and against bad crops and the like ; when they had the same land, and subsistence, and a provision made for them against future wants and casualties, much more certain by paying their labour direct to their masters. They were not perhaps so very wrong in their reasoning."—*Laing, Notes on the German Catholic Church*, p. 125.

than ever was the dependence of the serf; the difference is, that the latter was dependent on a particular noble, from whom, however, he could escape by fleeing to towns, or enlisting in the king's service; while the former is dependent on a class, a dependence from which there is no escape. The man who can do nothing but make a sixth portion of a pin, may change service from one pinmaker to another; but he cannot without capital, youth, and more than common intelligence learn a new manufacture. He cannot make a single object of his own proper work, he can only work in concert with others, when employed by a capitalist who can pay the gang; just as a horse trained to double harness only, and incapable of being taught to go in single harness, or be ridden, could never be used unless some one provided him a fellow. As for enlistment, the great resource of adventurous peasants, that is not open to the meagre, ill-developed, sickly artisan, whom the recruiting serjeant always rejects, if he can find a peasant instead; and as for emigration, the healthy bodies and stout muscles of agriculturists, not the soft hands and bent frames of the weaver and the spinner, are the necessities for success as colonists. This dependence upon a class of manufacturers who regulate the number they employ according to the changing prosperity of trade, leads to those alternations between comparative wealth and poverty that are found to be in all countries the most fertile sources of unhappiness and crime. It is established that the districts in which the alternations between poverty and wealth are greatest, and not the districts of settled poverty, are the districts of most crime*; and in this case crime and unhappiness are joint effects of a common cause. If the rich manufacturer would in his charity, if not as a duty, relieve against these alternations, unhappiness would be diminished and crime checked.

* Quetelet, *Sur l'Homme*, ii. 199, *sqq.*

Now, if without reducing a workman's power to change his master, these inducements of kindness tempted him to remain in the same service, and a relationship, other than that of mere hire, were established, there would be perhaps more dependence on an individual, but a less grating dependence on a class, or on markets; and who will say that the former is not the more happy kind of dependence than the latter? In affection and respect, they might soon lose the idea of dependence, — an idea, which we have little reason to suppose was very present to the mind of the peasant of the middle ages.*

But I may not talk further of an endless theme. My definition of happiness explains how it is that there are so many different definitions of abstract happiness, and all of them true in the concrete. One man will tell you happiness consists in pleasure, another in work, a third in health, a fourth in domestic affections. Each believing it to consist in that in which he is most deficient, and therefore knows would be most conducive to his tranquillity, and thus unconsciously bearing his tribute of testimony to the abstract proposition, that perfect happiness consists in the tranquillity produced by an equal development and equal exercise of the functions of the mind and body. And so in nations, happiness is never to be provided for two nations in the same manner; for as the equilibrium is differently distributed, so it requires to be righted in a different manner. But let the statesman first embrace the idea that happiness is thus produced, and then he will hardly fail to find out in his own nation where and how

* "N'ayant point conçu l'idée d'un autre état social que le sien, n'imaginant pas qu'il eût j'amaïs s'égalé à ses chefs, le peuple recevait leurs bienfaits, et ne discutait point leurs droits. Il les aimait lorsqu'ils étaient cléments et justes, et se soumettait sans peine et sans bassesse à leurs rigueurs, comme à des maux inévitables que lui envoyait le bras de Dieu. L'usage et les mœurs avaient d'ailleurs établi des bornes à la tyrannie, et fondé une sorte de droit au milieu même de la force." — *De Tocqueville, Dém. en Amér.* i. 13.

the equilibrium is disturbed ; and above all, let English statesmen study well the causes of English unhappiness and alleviate them without changing the forms of English society. If they cannot or will not do so in time, the matter will be taken out of their hands, and after troubles and sorrows innumerable, will be established among the English that form of society which is found on the continent of Europe the most useful for populations not destitute of arts and ingenuity. Many thousands of our fellow-countrymen would find that a happy day which divided the soil of England among peasant-proprietors. Each man living upon the produce of his field, and the fruit of his varied industry, would look back with no regret to the days when he toiled by the furnaces, or bent over his master's loom from the rising to the setting sun ; and I cannot doubt that under such a régime a greater number of persons would enjoy a rational happiness than under the present ; but the commerce, the wealth, the intellectual activity of the country, and its position among the nations would no longer be maintained. We should resemble, as to the distribution of property, the Belgians, the Swiss, the Norwegians, and still more the French. If this is not a consummation which people desire, let them take heed and bestir themselves, not by noisy meetings and demonstrations, but by each working quietly and unostentatiously in his own sphere.

CHAP. XXIX.

COLONIES.

WE have now ended our description of the great tree of national story. Of such consists the sacred grove that overhangs and shelters that steep and rugged path up which humanity is slowly ascending. One growth is tall and slim, another gnarled and stumpy; symmetry and all its violations stand in contrast together, and in the leaves, the bark, and the light branches, no one tree sees its perfect fellow. Yet in the rude trunk, in the leading boughs, and in the general fashion and laws of growth, they are alike. They are formed after one great archetype that existed in the mind of the Creator, but they all fall short of it after different degrees, so that in their defect consists their variety.

But they stand not alone; around each giant of the grove offshoots start up, and of these I have now to speak.

Nations are originally formed by the settlement of migratory tribes, which wander about in search of new pastures and new conquests, and seldom settle till they have reduced some peaceful agricultural people to be their serfs. Of this kind were the migrations of the Dorians and Thessalians in Greece, and of the Northern swarms in modern Europe. Hardy and reckless, they increase and

multiply with prodigious rapidity, when the conquest of surrounding countries affords a means of subsistence to their redundant population; but when they have filled these countries with the flower of their warlike youth, they take one of two courses—either they retain their old mode of gaining subsistence, viz. plunder or pasturage, and limit their increase so as to prevent the population exceeding those means of subsistence, as the Tartar and Circassian tribes do now; or they increase their means of subsistence by becoming agricultural, and thus allow a proportionate increase of population.* This was the course of the German and Scandinavian tribes, and produced the state of Norway and Switzerland at the present time.

Till a tribe has become agricultural, it has scarce any tie to the soil on which it may happen to dwell. A national existence is hardly to be ascribed to the inhabitants of any territory till these inhabitants have become agricultural; a step which they seldom take without exposing themselves to the incursion of a more warlike tribe, which establishes over them an aristocracy.

These migrations and wars are the necessary means for the formation of nations, and the communities which they form are not colonies or dependencies of any other community, but are distinct nations. Athens and Sparta were not colonies of any other part of Europe, yet they were peopled by immigrations; so likewise Rome and England owns not as a mother-country the home of Saxon, Goth, or Dane.

Colonies and plantations are formed only by emigrations from settled and progressive nations. The character and result of these emigrations depend upon the stage of national progress in which they take place. And to understand colonies in general, it is necessary to observe in

* See, on the sudden increase of population when a nomad people becomes agricultural, Humboldt, *Essai sur la Nouvelle Espagne*, i. 322.

what stages of national existence colonies are sent out, and to observe how the characteristics of the colonies vary with the stage of national existence in which they are sent out.

1.—The Norwegians, the Asturians, and a large portion of the Swiss, present to us examples of the first stage of settled life, when the subsistence of those who remain is obtained by agriculture or the keeping of flocks and herds, for all mountain people are necessarily, to a great extent, pastoral, even though they be not nomadic. These people are all warlike; the Norwegians especially were so at the time of the crusades, and disposed of no small portion of their surplus population in those expeditions. The Swiss and Asturians have, however, more warlike energies in the present day, and if the countries around them were weak and thinly populated would increase much faster than they now do, and send the swarms of their vigorous youth to found aristocracies over their weaker neighbours. There being no such opportunity, and trade and commerce being little to their taste, or little within their reach at home, they limit their population very nearly to their present means of subsistence,—the Norwegians with the greatest exactness, a new couple seldom marrying till the death of an old couple has made a homestead vacant.* The Swiss and Asturians, though very moderate in their rate of increase, are less so than the Norwegians, and increase beyond the means of subsistence at home. They relieve themselves by sending their superfluous youth abroad to be the cooks, the valets, and the mercenaries of Europe. None of them, however, who can help it, settle abroad, but return to die on the slopes of their well-loved hills. For the love of their native land is more ardent among the people who form these unconquered communities than in nations where an aristocracy has been founded by conquest, and the countries free from conquest are always

* Malthus, i. 367, *sqq.*

those which are the most barren and sterile, least worth conquering ; and that, and none other, is the reason why the most barren and sterile countries are most loved by their inhabitants.

Thus from people living in this unprogressive and almost pre-national stage there are no colonies.

2. In countries where an aristocracy is established, either by the invasion of a new race, or, as in Spain, by the reconquest of the country from expelled invaders, and the possession of large fiefs by the principal chieftains, the higher class of the state looks upon military adventure, either in the service of the sovereign or by independent campaigns, as the only honourable mode of gaining more wealth than it already possesses. The younger sons and poorer members of this military aristocracy avail themselves with avidity of the opportunity of a foreign exploit ; either one which shall bring them home again laden with booty and glory, and fit to rank on a level with the highest members of their order, or, in default of that, shall give to them in other lands the means of honourable subsistence which they cannot find in their own. An inroad by military adventurers of this class upon a settled agricultural people is not at first sight very distinguishable from the invasion of a whole nomad tribe, seeking to found an aristocracy, but there is in effect this essential distinction : the tribe emigrates with women and children, and the conquering aristocracy remains a distinct race from the conquered* ; the others are mostly unmarried freebooters, who go forth to win possessions with their sword. Sometimes they return home with their booty to reclaim their high position among the warrior race from which they spring, but more often they settle in the countries into which they have fought their way, and marrying women of the country, become the parents of a motley race,

* The emigration of the Dorians into the Peloponnese, who carried with them their wives and children, is an instance. Müller, Dor. i. 88.

which, after a few generations, is unable to retain any line of distinction between conquerors and conquered.

An example of this kind of colonisation is afforded by the early Greek colonies in Sicily, Italy, and Asia Minor, which were founded, the Sicilian and Italian by military adventurers from the Doric and Achæan races in Greece, the aristocracy in the parts of Greece in which they were settled; the Asiatic by similar adventurers from the Ionians, the military aristocrats of Attica.* The mendacious vanity of their descendants frequently invites us to believe that these roving Grecian bands were composed of Iliadic heroes returning from Troy.†

These emigrating offshoots of the aristocracy, leaving the castle camps of their fathers with no other possessions but their hardy frames and their implements of war, are not to be confounded with the later colonists selected by the government of the mother country from a very different class of its population, and manifesting the difference of their origin by the difference of their result.

The military adventurers from the Grecian aristocracies, as soon as they had obtained a footing for themselves in their new colonies, married women of the country‡, and thus mixing with the original population, formed a new race, partaking principally of the characteristics of the

* Müller, Dorians, i. 87.

† It is impossible to attribute these early Grecian colonies wholly to emigrants from one tribe, for each dominant race sent forth its military adventurers, who must frequently have met in the new territories and settled there together. Sybaris and Croton were formed principally by Achæans, who were the dominant race in the south of Thessaly and on the eastern side of Peloponnesus; the Dorians expelled them from Argos and Laconia, whereupon they conquered and expelled the Ionians, then settled on the northern coast of Peloponnesus. The Ionians crossed into Attica and became the dominant race there. Thus Dorians, Achæans, and Ionians, were all aristocrats in their own territory in the mother country.

‡ *e. g.* The Spartan founders of Cyrene; Müller, Dor. i. 142 — the Greeks in Sicily; Grote, Hist. of Greece, iii. 492. On the colonies of Sparta formed by military adventurers, see Müller, Dor. i. 141, *sqq.*

Greek element, but different in character from the Greek populations at home ; partly by reason of the intermixture of Sikel, or Italian, or Phrygian, Libyan, or Carian blood, but still more on account of the difference of political elements, for no strict line was established between aristocracy and democracy, no barrier between race and race as in the countries from which these roving adventurers set out. There came to be but one race, one language, one religion*, and one mode of gaining a livelihood. The immigrants laid aside their exclusively military habits, and became in Sicily first agriculturists, and afterwards, with the assistance of fresh Greek immigrants, traders ; and in Ionia the original immigrants seem at once to have taken to trade, for they probably found a kind of civilisation, and joined in and improved it, the increase of population requiring an increase of the means of subsistence ; while, as in Sicily, they seem to have been the first to bring organised industry and tillage to their new homes. But in whatever state of civilisation the original inhabitants were, they were admitted to leaven the mass, and soon derived from the Greeks many of their characteristics, as the Greeks in turn were modified by them.

These colonies, therefore, started upon the career of national development with no other distinctions among them except what wealth marked out. None were very rich at first, but whatever might be the difference between the highest and lowest, there was nothing to impede the inhabitants rising or falling among themselves in proportion to their wealth. Thus these communities were free from the chief impediment to commerce — aristocratic hauteur and exactions.†

They had, on the other hand, strong incentives and opportunities to be commercial in the maritime situation

* See, on the modifications of the Greek religion in Asia Minor caused by the fusion of the races, Grote, iii. 284.

† See, among others, Thirlwall, Greece, ii. 112.

of the greater part of these settlements, and in the spirit of naval enterprise, which having brought the emigrants to their new home, might lead them again upon the sea in search of wealth, and above all, in the sudden increase of population, for these conquerors did not usually put to death the former inhabitants*, but mixing with them, formed an additional pressure on the means of subsistence. All these circumstances combined to make the Italian and Asiatic Greeks commercial, while the present states of Greece were still ruled by trade-despising aristocracy; and they accordingly sprung up in an early and a short development. Sybaris, Croton, and Locri† in Italy; Miletus, Samos, and Ephesus in Asia, and a crowd of inferior cities, were the leaders of the civilisation of the world in the middle of the sixth century before Christ; while aristocratic Athens, Sparta, Corinth, and Ægina were yet inglorious. So the Hanse towns of Germany (though entirely different in the nature of their origin from the early Greek colonies) arrived at a splendid acme while the great kingdoms of Europe were still devoted to war and agriculture. But the very reason that made the acme of these early Italian and Asiatic Greeks more early, made it also less perfect than the acme of their parent states. They had no aristocratic element, and therefore no literature, except gay lyric songs — the vehicles of sensuous music, sweet elegies, like those of Mimnermus exhorting the soft Ionian plutocrat to enjoy the passing hour‡; but for ingenious industry in elegant arts, in refinement of manners, and in addiction to physical science and investigation §, the

* The Ionian Greeks put to death the Carian men and married the women; but this does not appear to have been a common practice, and probably was caused by the conduct of the Carians (Thirlwall, ii. 95).

† Grote, iii. 519, 527.

‡ Müller, *Literature of Ancient Greece*, p. 116.

§ The Ionian and the Pythagorean schools were both schools principally of physical science, which, as I have elsewhere remarked, is

Italic and Asiatic Greeks have left a fame which entitles them to an undying memory among the greatest commercial states of the world. It is evident that as these states became richer, a plutocracy rose up within them; and the contests between this plutocracy and the poorer citizens have been blunderingly called by the ancient writers contests between an aristocracy or democracy, for they never kept constantly in view the clear distinction between aristocracy and plutocracy* any more than the moderns do when they write about Venice.

As the states of the continent of Greece became less aristocratic and more commercial, they gradually drew away the trade from these Italian and Asiatic Greeks, who had then become rich, luxurious, and idle; and it is amusing to see how, in the half century before its fall (510 B.C.), Sybaris was reproached by the Greeks of the peninsula for its luxury, its effeminacy, and its vice, in the same way as our strict and solemn ancestors in the time of Ascham looked upon Venice, then the most refined and luxurious city of the world, as the corruptor of all the English youth who went there; and if the Italian cities had then yielded to the corruptions of wealth, those

always more connected with the democratic and plutocratic elements of a nation, and with the employments congenial to those elements, than with an aristocracy. In politics, Pythagoras appears to have been anti-democratic, though he preached loudly against pomps and vanities.

* See for instance the contests in Sybaris, referred to by Niebuhr, i. 158. So in Massilia (Grote, iii. 533) the growth of a plutocracy is clearly discernible: it has perplexed both ancients and moderns, who, believing aristocracy to be a Doric characteristic and Massilia to be an Ionic town, were at loss to account for this growth of what they called aristocracy. In Miletus the two parties were called Πλοῦτος and Χειρομάχας, Plut. Q. Gr. 32. ap., Thirlwall, ii. 117. May not these be translated capital and labour? The upper class in Syracuse and Samos was the γεωμόροι, and in the commercial colonies the οἱ παχεῖς, or men of substance (see Arnold ad Thucydides, viii. 21.; Griffiths ad Æsch. Septem, contra Theb. p. 86.) The ἐνταρπίδαι of Athens had no representatives in the colonies.

of the Ionic cities at the same time displayed in their revolt against Persia an effeminacy and worthlessness of character strikingly in contrast with the loyal and hardy sons of Athens. Thus these colonies came to bloom earlier than the mother country, and they perished sooner.

In early Roman history some colonisation of a like kind may be traced. The younger members of the military class are sent out with arms in their hands to win new homes, but the colonies so founded were not those for which Rome afterwards became famous.

After the aristocracies of modern Europe had been founded—this colonising element—the swarms of their warlike youth found an appropriate vent in the crusades. These celebrated expeditions would never have taken place, unless the aristocracies of France, Germany, and Hungary, and to a considerable extent England, had been devoted to war, contemptuous of peaceful occupations, and unable, therefore, to find any other honourable employment for their younger sons than military expeditions. Had there been no Mahometans to fight with, these adventurers would probably have gone by sea to some thinly inhabited coast, earned a footing by their sword, married women of the country, and established cities, populated after the first generation by a mixed race, commercial, and arriving at a speedy but not full development.

The fame of the Mahometans and the preaching of Peter the Hermit gave a different direction to this colonising element; and after the colonies of Christians had been founded by the earlier crusaders, a perpetual duty was imposed on the warrior youth of Europe to join in new crusades, and save these colonies from destruction by the Saracens.

The crusades differed, however, from the expeditions of the military freebooters who founded the earlier colonies of Greece, by including two other classes of

emigrants. First, kings and great princes of Europe, who, at leisure from broils in their own country, assumed the cross for the purpose of earning glory in this world and salvation in the next. They took with them a rabble rout of serfs and low adventurers, who brought upon all the crusades, but especially the earlier, an evil reputation. Most of this crew succumbed to the sufferings of the journey, or disappeared on the battle-field ; and the great personages in whose train they came, when fortunate enough to have accomplished the immediate object of each expedition unscathed, returned to their principalities and baronies in Europe, and exercised but a small influence on the colonies founded by the crusaders. The other class which joined the military adventurers from the aristocracies of Europe, consisted of commercial Italians. Italy (except the Normans of the two Sicilies) sent no aristocratic military adventurers to these expeditions, for the states of Italy had then advanced to a later stage of national progress than France, or Germany, or England, and the only Italians who joined the emigrations were traders animated by a prudent hope of gain, and sailors, engaged by the merchants of Italy to win by naval encounters a firm footing in Palestine for commercial settlements. So far, therefore, as the colonies in Palestine were founded by Italians, they deserve to be ranked with the commercial garrison colonies usually founded by nations in or just after their acme ; so far as they were founded by the chivalry of Europe (and the latter formed far the larger element), they deserve to be ranked with the earlier Greek colonies.

It is amusing to find in the otherwise dull pages of Vitriaco the distinction which he draws between the Italians on the one hand, and the Transalpines on the other. The latter furnished the military glory to the expeditions ; the Italians were grave and prudent, moderate in eating and drinking, profuse and ornate in speech, circumspect in counsel, above all things jealous of their

liberty: they elected a captain, dictated to him laws and regulations, and observed these themselves. Their use to the expedition was in trading and victualling, and occasionally in dexterity of naval battle. The French, Germans, and English, were more impetuous, less composed in mind, or temperate at table, profuse in expenditure, little cautious in speech, or provident in counsel, great zealots, and capital warriors.* What is this but describing a military aristocracy in its primitive condition on the one hand, and on the other, a nation of prudent traders? for the Italians then bore the character which we ordinarily more associate in our minds with the population of the Hanse towns or the Dutch republic, the character of hard-working, economical traders, whereby the Italians were enabled to acquire the wealth, and found the plutocracy, which afterwards gave them the character now most usually ascribed to them, that of a gay, luxurious, and artistic nation, delighting in splendour and expense. It was even said by their enemies that the Venetians were so far enlightened in the true doctrines of political economy, that they sold arms and food to the enemy.

In the first two crusades many of the kings and great nobles who went to Palestine—all intending to return—took their families with them, and though most of them returned, the constitution of the kingdom of Jerusalem regarded the barons as a distinct class—not mingled with the rest of the population, and gave freedom and laws to the peasants from Christendom who had earned emancipation by joining in these crusades. Thus the celebrated Assize of Jerusalem, a code originally framed under the auspices of Godfrey of Bouillon, A.D. 1099, provided an upper court, consisting of the king and the barons, for the arrangement of the affairs of that class. A second tribunal was composed of a select number of the most discreet and worthy citizens, who were to be judges in

* *Gesta Dei per Francos* Jacob de Vitriaco, Hist. Hier. l. i. c. lxvi.

the affairs of their equals. So that this kingdom was much in advance of the mother countries in Europe, where the commons had as yet no share in the administration of their affairs, except, indeed, in Italy, where the commons had become commercial. It was part of the scheme of the first two crusades to give liberty and freedom to such of the serfs of the mother country as went in arms to the Holy Land, and the princes of Europe, little anxious to have such a class of men return to their dominions, were willing to allure them to remain by possession of political privileges which they had not at home.

A third court provided for the settlement of the disputes of the Syrians and Oriental Christians by members of their own body according to their own laws. Below all were villains and slaves, who appear to have been regarded as mere objects of property.* This system was suited to the persons who founded the military kingdom of Jerusalem ; but when that kingdom was retaken by the Saracens, and a third crusade preached, the expediency was recognised of limiting those who should go out to the military aristocracy, which had formed a considerable and the most useful portion of the previous expeditions. Accordingly, women were forbidden to go†, the emigration of peasants was discouraged‡, and every effort was made to keep away the low adventurers and bandits, who had brought disgrace upon the character of the first crusaders. Kings and great princes still led the crusades, but as soon as a transitory peace was effected, returned to their native countries.

Those of the later crusaders who settled in the East consisted of the same class as the early Greek colonists—soldiers of fortune, who, nominally going against the infidel,

* Gibbon, ch. lviii.

† Michaud, *Hist. des Crois*, ii. 327. Some women had accompanied the first crusade ; see Michaud, i. 286, 337, 414.

‡ Michaud, ii. 320.

turned their arms to any conquest that lay in their path*, and, like them, they left in the settlements which they founded a mixed race, born to them by the native women. If the settlements in Palestine and Cyprus had been free from fresh supplies from Europe, their inhabitants must, like those of the Greek colonies, have consisted entirely of this motley race, which, free from any artificial discouragement to commerce, might have pursued a similar career to that of their prototypes in ancient history; but the constant warfare with the Turks in great measure prevented this, and the European element was continually kept up by fresh arrivals, but principally of unmarried soldiers from Europe.

All the Christian settlements had a strong commercial turn, some being founded by the Italians expressly as commercial settlements, and the prosperity, however short, of Tyre, Ptolemais, and Rhodes, must be ascribed more to the energy of the Italian merchants than to the industry of the military colonists or their motley descendants.† The dissolute and luxurious offspring of the European knights everywhere excited great contempt among historians‡, who say that they were fonder of a bath than a battle, and could make no head against the Saracens unless well supported by fresh military adventurers from Europe. It is certain that after each crusade, as soon as the new crusaders returned to Europe, the colonies found themselves unable to stand without a new crusade.§ Formed of such a population, it was no wonder that the thirty or forty colonies of the crusaders in the East were shortlived and inglorious.

The orders of chivalry established at Rhodes, afterwards at Malta, soon after their foundation made proof

* Michaud, iii. 50.

† See on Ptolemais, Michaud, iv. 327, 450, 452.

‡ Jacob de Vit. Hist. H. lib. i. c. 67, 72, and Mer. Sanct. Secret. Fid. Cr. p. 182, in *Gesta Dei per Francos*.

§ Michaud, iii. 32.

of nobility and rank a condition of admission into their numbers. They afforded considerable vent for the surplus population of the military aristocracy of Europe ; and the later crusades, which more and more partake of the character of mere freebooting adventures, in which the knights turned their arms wherever they could obtain profit and glory, employed the remaining superfluous swarms.

Thus the later crusaders had no objection, at the bidding of the Venetians, to attack Constantinople ; or at that of the Genoese, to make a descent upon Barbary*, with no more cause of enmity against the inhabitants than the Greek freebooters had against the inhabitants of Italy or Asia Minor. In fact, when the people of Barbary asked these valorous Christians why they came to attack them, they held a long debate to find a reason, and then replied that it was because the ancestors of the Saracens had crucified Christ. At which the Saracens, who were better read in Scripture history, laughed in their faces.

In consequence of these employments, this colonising element—the only one which the aristocratic countries of Europe then possessed—was prevented until the time of the discovery of the Indies from founding any enduring or thriving colonies after the fashion of the early Greek colonies in Italy and Asia Minor ; unless, indeed, we are to consider one of the kingdoms of Europe a hybrid colony of the aristocracies of the surrounding countries ; and this, curiously enough, when thus founded, gave to this colonising element of the rest of Europe its new direction.

The origin of the kingdom of Portugal has been the subject of conflicting traditions ; but it seems established, that it was commenced by an invasion of the king of Spain against the Moors then holding the country, and that, unable of his own forces to penetrate far into Portugal, Don Alonso, the King of Spain, invited aid from

* Michaud, iv. 533.

the military adventurers of the aristocracies of Europe, and particularly from France. Henry Duke of Burgundy, Raymond Count of Thoulouse, and many others, in 1087 A.D. responded to the invitation, and after conquering additional territory from the Moors, Henry received from Don Alonso an absolute or conditional gift of so much territory in Portugal as he already had under his superintendence, and permission to conquer what he could from the Moors as far as the river Anas; and, succeeding in his conquests, he compelled the Moorish king to submit to a Christian colony, formed, it must be supposed, of the valiant knights who won the victories of Don Henry. His son, Alonso after further victories, assumed the title of king, and proceeded to attack Lisbon, then held by the Moors. His forces were too small for the purpose; but a fleet of crusaders—French, English, Germans, and Flemings—anchored in the Tagus, and, joining Alonso's army, conquered Lisbon for him (A.D. 1147). Many of these military adventurers must have settled in the land which they assisted to conquer; and it appears to have been the policy of this and succeeding monarchs of Portugal to invite and allure Christian strangers, and particularly such as had taken the cross, into their dominions. "Neither is this," say the authors of the "Universal History *," "any imputation upon them; but quite the contrary; since, in those days, it was not the low and vulgar, but the bravest and the best men, that quitted their own countries to signalise themselves in other climates." The language of Portugal certainly proves the mixture of the people, for Spanish, Latin, French, and Arabic are blended with sprinklings of other tongues; and the intermarriage of these aristocratic adventurers from France and Germany with the women of the native Christian population produced that motley race which now inhabits Portugal. There never was

* Book xix. ch. 2.

a line drawn between conquerors and conquered, for there was no conquest, except as against the expelled Moors. Accordingly, even now, the contrast between Portugal and the nations founded by a conquest over the mass of the people is conspicuous in the relations between the higher and lower ranks, the only distinction being that arising from an hereditary difference of occupation, and the consequent diversities of manners, tastes, and character.

From the first, the knights who won Portugal from the Moors clustered round the monarch whose kingdom they first created and then enlarged; and this, together with the constant wars against Castile, made the court of Portugal essentially a body full of military ardour, who complained, as Candido Lusitano says in his life of Don Henry*, that the so-called blessings of peace were nothing but the banishment of valour. Whenever, therefore, their arms were laid down for a truce with Castile, this court of knights sent the most active of its body against the Moors or Mahomedan Africans, who were not rude and poor agriculturists, but civilised and rich, and possessing an extensive trade with India; and thus the Portuguese knights acquired a taste for adventures by arms across the sea, and a desire not merely to discover territory, but to become rich by these exploring expeditions. The Portuguese too, unlike the military aristocracies of their time, which established themselves by conquest over the native populations, did not despise commerce. So early as the reign of Don Denis, (who died A.D. 1324) commerce and trade flourished greatly, opportunities of commerce being given to the Portuguese by the frequent visits to their coasts of crusaders on their way to the Holy Land. And there is reason to suppose that in many respects the Court of Portugal, which included all the persons in that country who were capable of com-

* *Lisb.* 1758, p. 4.

mening any important movement, was actuated by a spirit of rivalry towards the Italian merchant nobles, for Italy was then the principal country of the world in commerce, arts and civilisation, and the communication of the Portuguese with the Italians gave to the former the opportunity, of which they appear to have availed themselves, of learning from the Venetians the art of maritime science, and a sufficient knowledge of the means by which Venice acquired its wealth and power, to raise a spirit of emulation in the hearts of the princes and their courtiers, who were seeking in vain some employment for their superfluous energy which might lead to glory and profit. The Knights of Portugal, connected thus with Italy and the Moors, were the first, at least of Christian nations, who made the military adventures necessary as a vent for the surplus of their nobler population and for its employment, directly subservient to the purpose of attaining wealth, and at the same time conducted their adventures with the aid of all the science then known in Europe, and in the progress of them increased the science that they used. I have shown how the crusades united the characters of mere military exploits with that of expeditions undertaken for the purpose of founding commercial stations; but though the expeditions as a whole united these characters, those who took part in them did not; the French, German, and English performed the purely military labour in the crusades, and had no concern with commerce, while the Italians devoted themselves exclusively to the advancement of their commercial interests by the crusaders' expeditions and conquests. The Portuguese in the beginning of the fifteenth century were the first nation, in modern Europe at least, which made these expeditions both military and commercial: the first discoverers were princes or what are called men of good family; and in thus setting an example and a fashion to the military adventurers of other nations, their career of prosperity, though brief, has exercised upon the rest of

the world an influence whose extent it is impossible to exaggerate.

Portugal being at the middle of the fifteenth century the only country in the world which combined military ardour with commercial enterprise, took the lead in the expeditions of Europe to the East; but it is an error to suppose that the armaments which went forth to discover a new world were composed alone of Portuguese. Even so early as the time of Henry the Navigator, the surplus military population of the aristocracies of every part of Europe, even from the distant wilds of Denmark, flocked to Portugal* to receive from Henry the route to new countries and new possessions; that same element in modern civilisation which in the ancient left the peninsula of Greece to conquer for itself new homes on the shores of Ionia and of Italy.

As they discovered the countries the Portuguese and the warriors who went in their train made subjects of the natives. In 1442, Gonzales Baldeza, commander of an expedition fitted out by Prince Henry, brought to Lisbon ten slaves. These were the first slaves seen in the peninsula since the days of the Romans. The Knights of Portugal not being aristocrats by conquest in the country in which they lived, and therefore not holding their poorer countrymen in villenage, were pleased with the discovery that gave not merely to the warlike navigators in their new domains, but even to the nobles who remained at home, a class of abject slaves.

While the Portuguese, partly in consequence of their discoveries, and partly influenced in their desire to rival the Italians, were becoming more commercial, they likewise employed themselves in establishing in the Indies commercial stations after the fashion of the colonies of late nations, intended solely to draw together the commerce of all the surrounding country for the benefit of

* Lafitan, *Hist. des Découv. des Port.* i. 17.

the mother country. As the Portuguese united the character of the French and the Italian crusaders, so their colonies were both of the military and commercial type. The distinction is this. The colonies founded by military adventurers are founded for the purpose of giving those adventurers new possessions, though they frequently become commercial for their own support; but commercial colonies are those founded by individual traders, or planted out by the mother country as nuclei to collect the trade of the surrounding neighbourhood for the benefit of the individual trader or the general body of traders of the mother country.

The brief but glorious career of Portugal is like a miniature and imperfect copy—seen, as it were, through the wrong end of a telescope—of a true national development. No nation has yet achieved the perfect realisation of this development; but in general at the period of the national acme, some one or more of the elements of national greatness might be found in great prominence, while others were wholly wanting; whereas in Portugal, not a single political element was wholly wanting, nor was a single political element brought to any high development. There was a semblance of a military aristocracy, but it was a mere set of courtiers not divided by race from the rest of the nation; there was a semblance of a class of enterprising merchants, sons of the converted Jews, but even these did not belong to a subject race, and try to establish an independent civic element, while many of the merchants were themselves members of the military class, and Portugal was destitute of a distinction between aristocracy and democracy, or between aristocracy and plutocracy. No civil struggle involving principles and wars between classes, prolonged and matured its national greatness. The colonies reflected this quality. The earliest have the air of military adventures, like the early colonies of the Greeks to Italy and Ionia, and of the Spaniards to America; but in-

sensibly, and almost immediately, the colonising of the Portuguese became more like the Italian—the plantation of commercial stations to trade with the mother country. Thus in 1510 the Portuguese, making their way to Malacca, then the centre of a vast commerce, and inhabited by Mahometans, sought to make a settlement therein as simple merchants, that is, to establish a commercial colony; and it was not till after the Arabs had aroused a spirit of hostility against them in Malacca, that they proceeded to make themselves masters of the place by force.*

If the Portuguese in their origin are a mixed race, and deserve almost to be considered as a colony from the aristocracies of Europe, founded among and mixing with the old Gothic agricultural population subjected by the Moors, so still more was the race which populated the colonies of the Portuguese mixed and motley. The absence of any strong pride of race in Portugal allowed at times the Jews to live on nearly equal terms, and intermingle with the population of Portugal; and there is probably not one Portuguese of the mother country of whom it can be predicated with any respectable plausibility, that he has not Jewish blood in his veins. In the colonies of Portugal the infusion of the Jewish blood was still stronger. The military adventurers who first went out from Portugal, not despising commerce, but, on the contrary, seeking wealth as much as glory, did not discourage the settlement of the Jews in the colonies which they founded, and the persecution which at times raged against them in Portugal drove the richer and more energetic to the Brazils. There all immigrants from Europe, including the exiled and proscribed from every nation, mixing again with the native race, produced a population which, soft and luxurious like Sybaris of old, was full of commerce, luxury, and vice, but added an astounding cruelty of despotism peculiarly

* Lafitan, i. 350, *sqq.* Raynal, Hist. Phil. i. 89, *sqq.*

their own, instilled into them by the old religious animosities. "Tous les vices qui sont epars ou rassemblés dans les pays meridionaux les plus corrompus, forment le caractère des Portugais de Bahia."*

The Portuguese take no high place in the estimation of Europe. Their enslavement by the Spaniards, and three centuries of contamination with their colonies, have depraved a national character which, in the time of Henry the Navigator, was the best then existing; for it combined the boldness, enterprise, and frankness of the military character, with a love of science and discovery, and a willingness to turn those qualities to useful and sometimes noble purposes, and this at a time when the energies of France, England, and Germany were still divided between war in its rudest, and agriculture in its most ignorant form, and when the states of Italy, under the influence of an exclusive love of gain and luxury, were losing the high character without which no nation can stand in the foremost place. From 1418 to 1578 Portugal possessed many of the characteristics of a national acme. From that time it has steadily declined, and has never had any sound constitution, nor the elements upon which such a constitution could be based.

But though the character of those parts of Portugal which make themselves most known to foreigners and travellers, namely, the great towns and their vicinities, is now ranked among the lowest in Europe, the peasantry of the remote districts of Portugal, like the peasantry of many parts of Italy remote from the great towns, is simple, honest, hospitable, and happy.

Besides the Portuguese there was another nation in Europe which took no part in the earlier crusades, for the

* Raynal, Hist. Phil. liv. ix. ch. 53. Raynal fixes the death of Albuquerque (1515) as the period when the character of the inhabitants of the Portuguese colonies began to decline (Hist. Phil. i. 98). On the decline of character in the Portuguese colonies, see Heeren, Political Systems, i. 130.

Spaniards were themselves employed in winning back their country from the Moors, and occasionally availed themselves of the assistance of the crusaders on their way to the Holy Land.* It was not till the eighth crusade (1255—1276) that Catalonia and Castile sent any considerable number of warriors to the relief of the Christians in Palestine. The interest of the crusades was then on the wane, and when the Portuguese court and its military discoverers had aroused the zeal, if not the avarice, and inflamed the rivalry of its neighbouring kingdom, the Spanish knights deemed it not worse service to the Christian religion to convert the pagans of the other hemisphere than to do battle for the holy sepulchre; for both Portuguese and Spaniards, in their exploits, quitting countries where arms and priestcraft were the dominant occupations, always made religion a pretext when it was not a virtue. They went forth with the sword in hand and with the cross upon their breast, and the outrages committed by the weapon were excused, if not sanctified, by the symbol.

At the time when the crusades to the Holy Land were gradually going out of vogue, certain adventurers of the same class as that from which the crusaders were drawn left the northern provinces of Biscay and Guipuscoa, and in 1393 established themselves on one of the group of islands since named the Canaries. In the fifteenth century, adventurers from Andalusia, most if not all of noble families, possessed themselves of others of these islands, and continued to hold them till 1495, when Ferdinand and Isabella, reducing the rest of the group and Teneriffe, claimed the whole as the possession of the crown of Spain.† This earliest attempt at colonisation by Spaniards was

* As in the third crusade, 1188—1192; Michaud, ii. 439. Stray Spaniards appear previously to have joined the crusades (Michaud, ii. 348), but they were merely exceptional instances.

† Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella, 253; Raynal, Hist. Phil. ii. 8.

marked by the characteristics of colonies founded by the surplus energy of a military noblesse (though, as I have elsewhere noted, there was not in Spain any more than in Portugal a true aristocracy), and this character lasts through the best period of the Spanish colonisation. The colonists are independent military adventurers, acquiring what territory they can as their own property; some setting out with grants from the crown beforehand of all which they might win, others holding their new lands as petty sovereigns, till the multitude of them induces the crown to send out an armament and a viceroy, and exact an acknowledgment of its sovereignty over the new possessions gained by its former subjects. The colonists are cavaliers and hidalgos, without the patience, subordination, or industry requisite for establishing a well-ordered settlement. They enter a land as if their sole object were to burn, pillage, fire, and destroy. This might have corrected itself in the second generation, if, let alone by the mother country, and without Indians to command, they had been driven to some kind of agriculture and patient industry to obtain their sustenance. But they had little taste for clearing the ground and manufacturing its products, when the natives were at hand to do all the drudgery, and the fresh adventurers were continually arriving, animated by the same destructive impulses, so that when one coast was pillaged, instead of resting there, and by peaceful employments repairing the waste which they had committed, the greater part pushed on to pillage fresh coasts. And it was not till many a wave of invading Spaniards had rolled on to the interior in pursuit of mines that their successors, landing on the ravaged and exhausted coast, began to think of agriculture; and then their agriculture was only to extract as much produce as they could by the labour of the Indians, export it, and so become rich.*

The war of extermination which had been waged

* See Humboldt, *Nouv. Esp.* iii. 6, 10, 11.

against the Mahometans in their own country, and their religious madness, imbued these Spanish adventurers with the atrocity which has rendered their name infamous. Unlike the military colonists of antiquity, they were not content with acquiring territory and subjects; but the reports of the golden wealth of the Indies made gold-producing countries the sole object of their search. The Court of Spain, eager, by possession of transatlantic wealth, to correct the poverty and natural insignificance of the peninsula which it shared with Portugal, inflamed and increased this thirst for gold, by organising, under its sanction, many of the bands of adventurers who were eager to quit the Spanish shores, and holding out to the captain of each horde a hope of reward, proportionate to the auriferous richness of the new territory which his exertions might add to the domains of the Spanish Court.

So early as 1519 Las Casas perceived the mischief of all the colonies being mere military adventures, and he went through Castile to try to persuade agricultural labourers and artisans (such as they were) to join in founding a colony in America. But this class, which indeed had scarce an independent existence in Spain, did not respond well to his invitation; and he, with the utmost difficulty, obtained 200 of them to accompany him to Camana.* Nor were subsequent attempts of the kind more successful; and thus the Spaniards who settled in the new world nearly all belonged to the soldier or sailor classes; and the industrious citizen—a commodity never largely produced in Spain—was not found among the Spanish colonists.

Conquering the Mexicans and Peruvians, nations not rude agricultural serfs, but possessed of a certain ingenuity, skilled in the mechanical arts, and if not possessing luxury themselves, at least knowing how to minister to the luxury of others, these Spanish conquerors, agglome-

* Raynal, *Hist. Phil.* ii. 177, *sqq.*; Brougham, *Col.* i. 383, *sqq.*

rating into the great towns, allying themselves with women of the native population, (for very few women came from Europe,) receiving from the crown enormous grants of lands and subjects, and increasing their wealth by sending whole tribes of Indians underground to dig out the precious metals for them, soon became, not aristocrats, but plutocrats.* The distinction of race, at first a marked one, vanishes in two or three generations, except as to those Indians and negroes who could claim no Spanish ancestor, and as to those fresh immigrants who were natives of Spain; but a distinction of race can never be kept up so as to found an hereditary aristocracy, unless there is a sufficiency of women of the higher race to enable each man of that race who chooses to found a legitimate family of pure aristocratic descent. In Spanish America this was impossible; and the real distinction is therefore one of wealth. The descendants of the original conquerors, crossed as they were not seldom with red or black blood, but soon recovering sufficient whiteness of skin to be respectable†, retained the enormous possessions of their ancestors. Commerce was never despised in Spanish America‡, and great fortunes were constantly being made by the mines§, and by the labour of poor Indians in factories, in which—entrapped by a most infamous system of fraud exposed by Humboldt||—they were imprisoned with convicts, never seeing the outside of the workshop except on Sunday. Not merely were these poor artisans and the wretched tribes who lived underground to make their masters rich poorer than the artisans of any nation in its acme; but the whole of the lower orders—white, semi-white, red or black—were poorer than the average poor of other countries at any period of national progress. Nowhere has the contrast between rich and poor been

* Humboldt, *Nouv. Esp.* i. 40.

† *Ibid.* ii. 48.

‡ Raynal, ii. 240.

§ Humboldt, ii. 28.

|| *Ibid.* iv. 294.

so great*, except among the Romans of the late empire. The causes and the results were alike. In each case the great owner had obtained his possessions by fraud, force, and cruelty. When once they were obtained, he ceased to live on his estates; he had no sympathy with the cultivators or the artisans; he looked upon his estates only as workshops, and the dwellers thereon as machines for making riches. The poor cultivator, or miner, or artisan, was ground down to the lowest point at which existence could be maintained, and the wealth extracted from his labour was spent in the luxury and ostentation of great towns. Nowhere was the ostentation of plutocracy more strikingly marked than in Mexico.† The inhabitants lived in town mansions replete with elegance and luxuries, lavishing fortunes on their wives and the negresses whom they publicly elevated to the rank of their mistresses. They were great patrons of the fine arts, choosing after the light that was within them or the babble of pretending connoisseurs. Many of Murillo's works went to Spanish America; and a particular quarter of the city of Seville, called *La Feria*, was occupied by artists and mechanics, principally employed by the colonists, who executed their paintings with so much promptitude that a piece or a saint which the devout buyer desired was sometimes painted while the price was being settled. "The traffic in this sort of pictures, and the speedy execution of them," says Signor Bermudez, in 1806, "was in former times much greater than at present, because an infinite number were embarked for America, which was another new stimulus for the progress of the art; and at that time they were not so bad as those painted in our days, for many professors, having nothing to employ themselves upon, applied to the freighters to the Indies, who never failed to occupy them, paying them in proportion to their abilities."

* Humboldt, iii. 289.

† Raynal, *Hist. Phil.* ii. 87.

All the arts and peculiarities which form the characteristics of a plutocracy appear prominently in the history of the towns in Spanish America. The lofty and magnificent palaces, which their ostentation induced them to build, despite the earthquakes that would have taught a wiser people to live in houses with only one story, were filled with every instrument of adornment which fastidious taste and expense could unite in providing; and a description of the mode of life among the Romans of the later Empire, the Venetians of the later Republic, the farmers-general of the time of the Bourbons, would, with small change, be apt to the society of Mexico and Lima in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The taste for music, a favourite one with every plutocracy, because it is an artificial substitute for that natural refinement and harmony of mind which the occupations of town life supply so much less than do those of a country life, became a passion in Lima, whose walls, says the historian*, never ceased to resound with the melody of the voice and of instruments, and in Lima, in those gorgeous days, they danced with a lightness and agility surprising to the stranger. Of literature there was none, nor was there any care for the languages or authors of antiquity. The only species of intellectual activity which at all flourished was exact science—mathematics, chemistry, mineralogy, and botany. It is not pretended that any discoveries were made in these by Spanish Americans, but they were studied; such studies being, as I have elsewhere remarked, more natural than any other to a plutocracy, especially when acquiring its wealth; and in the Spanish colonies they were much assisted by the government†, and were especially appropriate to the

* Raynal, *Hist. Phil.* ii. 240.


† See Humboldt, ii. 10, 15, 18. All the maritime commerce of the continent was concentrated at Vera Cruz (Humboldt, iv. 361), and of Cuba at Havanna. On the manufactures, see Humboldt, iv. 285, *sqq.*

great mining operations by which so many of the plutocracy of Spanish America obtained their wealth.

Well assorting with, and indeed a necessary companion of this depressed luxury, was the form of government — like that Rome, an imperial despotism. So long as they were secured in their possessions the plutocrats cared nothing for the form of government, and it appears to have been carried on principally by Spanish officials appointed and sent out by the home government. As in all centralised despotisms, the fury for titles reigned throughout the colonies. Those who had not surpassing wealth tried to correct the misfortune by official rank. Militia regiments were formed, apparently only for the purpose of giving the titles of the colonel and brigadier to persons who, in grand uniform and decorated with the Royal order of Charles III., sold you a pound of tobacco from behind their counters. How universal are the laws founded on human nature! In the remote Andes as in Paris, in Berlin, in Brussels, and Vienna, where the division is sharply drawn between governors and governed, who does not long for a title and an office to show to the spurned governed that he is one of the governors?

Thus they lived for two centuries and a half. The warrior spirit of the founders soon died out, and from the end of the 16th century till the beginning of the 19th, with very few and occasional disturbances, they enjoyed the lethargy of peace. Had I lived before 1812 I should have classed them as nations in the last stationary state of centralised despotism, beyond which there is no hope of progress. The Spanish colonies of the Continent at length severed themselves from Spain, and in 1824 settled their federal constitution. Loud pæans were sung by the friends of humanity for a new people added to the list of advancing nations. Yet where shall we class the Southern Americans now?

I have spoken in this place of the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, because they bear more similarity to the



colonies founded by the surplus of a military aristocracy, settled in a country following the course of full development, than to the colonies thrown out by any other element of such a country at any other period of its development. The Spaniards and the first Portuguese went forth as military adventurers, without wives or families, and the colonies which they founded were filled with a mixed population, most of them descended maternally from the native races. In these respects the Portuguese and Spanish colonies are like the colonies of an aristocracy and no other, but it must be remembered that neither Portugal nor Spain had any true aristocracy divided by birth, tastes, and employments from the rest of the nation; and the colonies of those countries, though beginning in private military adventure, ended in becoming affairs of state, in this respect resembling the colonies sent forth by a later stage of the development of the parent country. The Portuguese colonists, moreover, soon rendered the military subordinate to the commercial character, and, in this respect, still further assimilated their settlements to those founded by a far advanced nation.

This caution will prevent a misunderstanding of the true position of the Spanish and Portuguese among colonies, classed as colonies are classed here, with reference to the period of national development in which the mother country is at the time when they are sent out.

Colonies, when they are made the affairs of state, and when their commercial character gives them a great effect on the progress of the national development, should be reckoned among those disturbing forces which modify the true and simple development of a national progress. This effect is so principally exercised by the colonies sent out at a later period of national progress, and so slightly by the colonies sent out at an earlier, that I shall reserve my observations upon it. So far as the Spanish and Portuguese colonies were colonies sent out by a quasi-military noblesse, they exercised scarce any of this influence, so far

as they were colonies sent out under state protection, or for commercial purposes, they exercised this influence most largely.

The crusades and European wars had furnished sufficient employment to the surplus noblesse of Europe previously to the sixteenth century. The military orders still remained to satisfy the ambition of a large number of youthful knights, and the wars that raged in Europe described fortwo centuries more the greater portion of the military energy of the aristocrats of France, of Germany, of Hungary, and of England. If it had not been for those wars, knights of the same class which had gone forth to the crusades would have followed the Spaniards to the conquest of the New World.

England, by reason of its situation, least embroiled in the wars of Europe, and containing an aristocracy who must necessarily seek to gratify their love of adventure by exploits partly if not wholly maritime, was the first nation to send to the New World emigrants of the same class as the Spaniards. In a yet unwritten chapter of English history, for which the historian will seek his materials in the rude pages of Hakluyt, will be told how, during the latter half of the sixteenth centuries, the adventurous among the aristocracy of England fitted out expeditions at their own expense, and went forth for the discovery and the conquest of new lands and dominions.* In 1553, we read of the discovery of Muscovy under Sir Hugh Willoughby, and voyages were continually made in the next fifty years to Guinea, the Canaries, the Azores, Newfoundland, Virginia, and Florida. By that peculiar felicity to which so much of English greatness is owing, that there was between the nobleman and the merchant no impassable barrier, these adventurous

* Some of the English joined the original Spanish adventurers. Thus Hakluyt says (ii. 458) that the Spanish conquered the Canaries "with divers English gentlemen in their company."

spirits uniting themselves with humble merchants formed companies and obtained charters under the title of "the merchant adventurers of England."* It was a proud and stirring time for nobleman, for merchant, and for sailor, when their private argosies returned to the ports of England laden with the wealth of the newly discovered Indies, without its mattering much whether that wealth was obtained by conquest, by trade, or by the capture of some rich Spanish galleon returning from the golden colonies.


These expeditions were not fitted out for the purpose of founding colonies, nor did they directly result in them. Their leaders were the most adventurous of the noblemen and country gentlemen, and thus absorbed the most fighting portion of the aristocratic element; but inasmuch as the bar, the counting-house, and the parsonage opened spheres of action, to the two former of which at least it was not derogatory for the noble blood of England to descend, there was not the same pressure upon the honourable means of subsistence as in countries where the sole respectable employment for the aristocracy compelled the younger members of the aristocracy to conquer and settle in fresh dominions. *For this reason there were no colonies founded by the aristocratic element of England.*

In the time of Elizabeth our statesmen were of the aristocratic school in its best form. They were devoted to improving the order of English affairs, after the light that was in them. They saw the benefits that resulted to Spain and Portugal from the possession of colonies, which were not allowed to trade with any but the mother country. It occurred to the thoughtful men of the Elizabethan period, that it would add to the glory

* See this charter in Hakluyt, i. 298. The merchant adventurers who fitted out a fleet at their own cost, included the Marquis of Winchester, the Earl of Arundel, Earl of Bedford, Earl of Pembroke, and Lord Howard of Effingham.

of England to possess colonies like those of Spain, rich in mines, and full of a population that could trade alone with the merchants of our country. Our earliest colonies in America were entirely founded with this view. The great men of the age who devoted their private means to promote this which they conceived to be a public object, and companies of spirited merchants who, in the hope of grants of monopoly and other advantages, concurred in the project, collected from the streets of London and low places of resort throughout the kingdom all the ne'er-do-weels who were willing to leave England, and clothing, feeding, and transporting them to Virginia and Barbadoes hoped that they might become the germ of mighty colonies. The first charter to a colony granted by the Crown of England was to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, of Compton, Devonshire, in 1578, but his expedition ended in disaster. Sir Walter Raleigh's patent was granted in 1584, but his efforts to colonise Virginia likewise failed chiefly through the fault of the colonists — a worthless and vicious rabble.

These and the other attempts of the time were the result of schemes by patriotic statesmen managing the kingdom like an estate, and in consequence of perceiving that colonies were good for certain other kingdoms, concluding that they would be good for England. The colonies never succeeded, because the true colonising element of the time, the surplus population of a military aristocracy, was, as I have noted, drawn off to civil employment, and because the next stage of national life and its peculiar colonising element had not displayed itself in England before the time of the civil wars. The colonies of England before the time of the civil wars, take their place in the long catalogue of failures which have arisen from statesmen endeavouring to apply to their own country the institutions of a neighbouring people which either is in a different stage of national progress, or, if in the same, possesses different social



elements. England, if it tried to imitate the Italian republics in colonising, followed the example of communities in a much more advanced stage of national progress; if it tried to imitate the Spaniards, it took for its model a people nearly in the same stage of national existence, but possessing a superabundant class of young military nobles, which class in England being absorbed by civil pursuits or international and sometimes civil wars, was therefore not available for colonising.

3. It becomes necessary now to return to the development of a mother country proceeding in its natural course, undisturbed by the commercial colonies of its aristocratic adventurers, if any such have been founded. But first let us take Poland as an instance of a country long fixed in this stage. In Poland, up to its dismemberment, was maintained the broad line between a feudal aristocracy despising trade, and an ignorant populace of serfs employed in tilling the ground. Poland continued in this stage because the aristocracy was able to find subsistence for its increasing numbers by wars, and by exacting more rent from the serfs thus compelled to labour harder, and because those serfs, being without any towns and the advantages of an advent of strangers, never increased beyond their means of subsistence according to the established mode of obtaining it. Although the land would have been capable under other systems of supporting a vastly increased population, there was no opportunity of introducing any of those systems, and, according to the principle of Mr. Malthus*, "it is not either the power of the country to produce food, or even what it actually produces, that limits and regulates the progress of population, but the quantity which in the actual state of things is awarded to the labourer, and the rate at which the funds so appropriated increase."

* Population, ii. 393.

So Poland remained stationary, and might have remained so for many centuries, had no external force intervened ; the military aristocracy might have colonised, but not the serfs.

As soon as commerce commences in a country in the stage of national development in which Poland was before its dismemberment, its effect is to draw away part of the populace from serfdom, and make them free traders or manufacturers. As elsewhere noted, these persons generally gain the protection of the crown against the aristocracy, and form the nucleus of a democratic element in politics. Now during the early days of a feudal aristocracy, a country is far from being free from intestine broils and dissensions, but they are merely personal contests between sects of the aristocracy, often having their origin in a contest for the crown, and often in a mere superfluity of fighting energy. The defeated party is seldom expelled the State, for indeed the State then hardly exists, and the feuds are waged between neighbouring barons, each aiming to be sovereign in his own territory, and, in case of defeat, sufficiently punished by having that territory curtailed, his rank in the council of barons reduced, or a tribute exacted by the successful noble. But when expulsions do take place, the expelled persons are of two kinds. Either (1) a chieftain and his followers emigrate, *en masse*, with their wives and children, like Rollo from Denmark, to win a new settlement, and, in this case, they either, expelling the original inhabitants, establish themselves in the same relations as those in which they existed at home, or they subdue the original inhabitants and found a military aristocracy, in either case not founding a colony, but a new nation ; or (2) a band of unmarried military adventurers is collected by some younger son disgusted with primogeniture, or the election which has given the crown to an elder brother, and by them, thus going forth like the dissatisfied brothers of Medon or the scornful Dorieus, a colony is founded like

those which we have already described, full of a mixed population. The colonising consequence of party spirit among a military aristocracy, where party spirit means only personal quarrels, is this and none other, and thus, such dissensions do not lead to any new form of colonies. But after commerce has been introduced among the subject race, and with it some sparks of freedom, and thought—the child of freedom—parties arise, and feuds once waged between rival chieftains, with their tribes to back them, are now waged between parties having such watchwords as aristocracy and democracy, oligarchy and liberty, established constitutions and religious freedom, and so on.

It is a great and a noble thing for a nation when such parties arise, for from their strife and struggle are struck out the sparks that light up anew the torch of civilisation. In the ages when those divisions of party—no longer mere personal squabbles—but real contests of principle, divide the nation, we find a high tone of morals, derived originally from the rude and barbarous code of honour that prevails among a military aristocracy, but now directed to sensible points of conduct and feeling, and at the same time we have the aggressive spirit of a subject race then rising from oppression by arts and industry. This contest, simple in its origin, is yet fought under different banners and with different watchwords in a hundred arenas of intellectual tournament.

It is better for a nation, when those sections and factions which spring up within it remain undiminished in their country, and by their variety and strength give the utmost amount of vigour to the struggles of that stage of national life which is in labour with the acme. Pym, Hampden, Hazlerig, Cromwell, and many others who afterwards took an important part in the civil wars, and helped us to attain that anarchy of opinion, without which there is no true acme, were actually, it is said, on board a vessel prepared to sail for New England, and

were only stopped by special orders of the Privy Council. Historians of the spasmodic school would let the fate of the revolution hang upon the sailing of that ship. Had it sailed, the details of the revolution would have been different; but no sane and honest man can believe that the revolution would not have taken place. If, however, the greater number of that party had emigrated, there would of course not have been force enough left to produce the revolution, and, as in Greece, the whole of the defeated minority, seeking safety in flight, would have accelerated the arrival of the acme of the development, but, at the same time, stunted and impaired that development. It is seldom that a country is so fortunate as to retain all these contending factions. The struggle is often too hopeless, the shock of a contest too severe, and the persecuting charge of the victors too unrelenting, to admit a successful rally; and then nothing but flight is the fate of the vanquished. In such cases the weaker faction seeks a foreign land, where it may dwell free from the interference of social elements antagonistic to it, and where it fondly hopes to realise that state of society which, if it had its way, it would have established in the mother country. The faction departs, with wives and children and all their appurtenances around them; not to fight, if they can avoid it, for they are not imbued with military passions; not to found aristocracies, but to live in peace and industry, carrying into practice those theoretical principles and dogmas for which they contended so bitterly and so vainly at home.

In the history of ancient Greece, colonies of this kind were frequently made by parties who sought an existence in flight. The want of balance in the constitutions of the republic of Greece made the victory of one faction the sentence of exile to the other. Tarentum is a prominent instance of this. Exiled factions and families frequently joined the colonies already founded by military adventurers, and, bringing in their wives and families, strength-

ened the Grecian, though they did not attempt to eradicate the native element.*

In the rapid development of ancient Greece, colonies of this kind were thus scarcely to be distinguished from the earlier colonies. Both became rapidly commercial; both were free from aristocracy; both came to bloom earlier than the mother country. Some of the colonies of Tyre and Sidon were founded at the time when those states were torn by civic discords, and obliged to throw out the weaker party. Thus the city of Leptis Magna in the territory of Syrtis, was founded by an ejected party from Sidon.† The Tyrian colonists who founded Carthage appear to have belonged to this class. They came to their new territory as peaceful settlers, and bought the land for their city at a yearly tribute.‡

In the history of modern Europe occur several well-known examples of colonies caused by the flight, forced or voluntary, of defeated minorities. Of this kind was the emigration of the people of the Low Countries, who fled, about 1565, from religious persecution to England, with wives and families and peaceful arts; of this was the emigration of the Portuguese, whose blood was tainted by Jewish or Moorish ancestors, to Bordeaux, Antwerp, Hamburg§; the emigration that followed the revocation of the edict of Nantes of industrious French to England, Prussia, Switzerland, and the Hanse Towns; and the emigration of the Protestant Salzburgers from the Tyrol to Prussia.

The emigrants thus forced to leave their native country almost universally belong to the progressive industrious element, which finds in a home governed by theocratic and monarchic supremacy too severe a check to the free-

* Thus Sybaris opened its doors to all comers; see *Diod. xii. 9. ap. Grote, iii. 526.*

† *Sallust, Jug. c. 78. Heeren, Carthaginians, p. 28, note.*

‡ *Justin, xix. 2. Heeren, Carthaginians, p. 30.*

§ *Raynal, Hist. Phil. ii. §63.*

dom which their enterprise has engendered. They are either dwellers in towns or belong to that artisan-peasant class which, living on its small holdings, makes up its subsistence by manufacture, like the Salzburg population of wooden clock and toy manufacturers, on the north-eastern slope of the Tyrol. They depart with their wives and families, their arts and industry, their free and inquiring spirit, the most prominent shoot of that social element by whose development may be marked the progress of the nation at large to the leadership of human advancement. For with the increase in energy, wealth, and numbers of this civic artistic element, and its consequently increased pressure on the means of subsistence, increases in direct proportion the approach of the national acme; while, if this element is lopped off for ever, as was almost the case in Portugal, the nation stops immediately in its progress towards its acme, and remains in a stationary state. If it is but a portion that is removed, the energy which is left may, in time, supply the vacancy, as in the Netherlands, in France, and in England. It was a common mistake of the old English writers on colonies to complain that colonies depopulate a country. The effects which were attributed to an alleged depopulation, really follow from the national development being retarded, for the removal of however small a portion of the energetic, civic, artistic, and democratic element sensibly retards the national development.* This is not always an evil, for the slower developments are often the greater.

The matter may be looked at in this point of view :— National progress is mainly caused by the pressure of population on the means of subsistence, and the consequent resort to new means of subsistence; in other words, to improved agriculture, to new trades, and to subtle in-

* The development of Spain was retarded by the expulsion of the Moors, because their energy and capital were lost to the country, not because of the mere numerical loss of the people, and so with respect to the Huguenots of France.

ventions, all which, in themselves elements of progress, lead to the still greater element of progress—the enlightenment, freedom, and political independence of the people. Now, colonies are a subsidiary relief to the pressure of population on the means of subsistence ; instead of resorting to those elements of progress, part of the surplus population emigrates, and thus there is less necessity for those who remain to increase the means of subsistence, and so to advance the country on the road of national progress.

But though colonising and flocking into towns full of handicraft occupations are rival modes of relieving the pressure of population on the means of subsistence, one of them alone scarce ever affords a sufficient vent for the surplus population ; but the times which are marked in a nation's history by this flocking into towns, and increase of handicraft trades and commerce, are also the times of most energetic colonising. The pressure of population becomes then so great that both means of relieving it are resorted to, and yet, for a while, population goes on increasing so as to require a continuance of these two sources of relief.

In some nations one kind of relief has been, from accidental causes, more readily at hand than the other. For example, in Rome in the later days of the republic and under the empire, when the poorer free population pressed upon the means of subsistence, they could not obtain the relief of increased handicrafts and the ordinary employments of trading townsmen, because the handicrafts and many of these employments were performed by the slaves of the plutocracy. One relief for over-population was, therefore, denied to the free Roman population, and in consequence the surplus population relieved itself entirely by the other vent — colonisation.

In Holland, on the contrary, trade and handicrafts were, in the time of its acme, ever increasing and opening new paths of employment to the increasing population, so fast

as ever to absorb the increase, which, for physical reasons, is not rapid in Holland; consequently the Dutch never needed to have recourse to the other vent — colonisation, and never colonised for the sake of relieving population, but only founded garrison plantations for the sake of protecting trade.

Thus we may see how it generally happens that the period of most active, energetic colonisation, and the period of greatest energy and activity at home, synchronise in each national progress.

These civic emigrants, members of the industrious and progressive element, seek a new home where they may practise the arts and pursue the inquiries or indulge in the luxuries which were familiar to them. Accordingly, the Flemings and the French artisans settled in the towns of foreign nations, where the established religion was their own. The Portuguese, whose tainted ancestry was a perpetual source of opprobrium to them in Portugal, emigrated to the Hanse Towns, where the artisans plied their craft, the merchants turned their capital, and the plutocrats enjoyed the luxuries of an idle town life, and nobody reproached them that a Jew or a Moor had intervened in their lineage. In all these cases the success of immigrants adds new glory to their adopted country, but soon ceasing to remember their difference of origin, they assist the development of the foreign nations in which they settle, not merely by introducing arts, but above all by carrying with them the determined principle of democracy.

In the early history of our manufactures we find some spots in England suddenly replete with new inventions and with subtle industry, and that sturdy and turbulent independence of character which the concentration of hard-working townsmen generates. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Norwich excites our admiration as the centre of a great manufacturing and somewhat riotous population, descended from a colony of Flemings,

and we find the men of the West Riding of Yorkshire distinguished for many ages from the rest of Englishmen by a peculiar aptitude for handicrafts, by the long practice of woollen manufacture, and by their rough bold character. When traditions are examined, it is found that in the days of Edward III. a colony of Flemings came over to the West Riding, and settling there, taught the people of the country to combine manufacturing with agricultural pursuits. The result has been a population, keen, money-getting, surly, but withal honest, and loving above all things political and social independence. Those who wish to know the important part taken by these peasant proprietors of South Lancashire in obtaining religious freedom in the seventeenth century, can read it in Hunter's *Life of Oliver Heywood*.

These colonies may be called sporadic, for they are merely cast into a foreign nation which soon absorbs them, and with them may be classed the settlements founded by industrious families compelled to leave their own country by inundations or other physical disasters, who, not having sufficient power or numbers to found a distinct colony, earn a footing in some foreign nation. Of this kind was the emigration of the Dutch, about the beginning of the twelfth century, to Saxony, Holstein, Mecklenburg, Brandebourg, Pomerania, England, especially Norwich, and to Wales.

Of all sporadic colonies the most celebrated in the history of the world has been Geneva. Founded in the sixteenth century by the most moving and independent spirits of French Protestantism, it received another influx more liberal and enlightened in the seventeenth century, so that if we knew nothing of France but watched solely the emigrants to Geneva, we should be able to draw out a skeleton of the whole of French society, as naturalists can reconstruct the whole organisation of an extinct animal by the study of a single bone. For at first the sturdy old calvinistic fanatics, kindred spirits to the soldiers

of Cromwell, left France because they could not, like their brethren of England, crush the aristocratic monarchy and the hierarchy antagonistic to them; then came the choicest of those who in France sought in vain to reconcile the anarchy of thought necessary for the acme with the social system there established. The country which produced these emigrants—commercial, Protestant, inquiring, of free spirit and of undaunted energy, must then have been in the stage of existence fitted for the establishment of a constitutional régime, accompanied by every attribute of the national acme. But unable to reduce the antagonistic elements of hierarchy and aristocracy from their then undue preeminence, the flower of the French democracy, the leaders of the national progress, are compelled to emigrate to a foreign soil, though in such numbers that they live apart, a little nation of their own, speaking their native tongue, and conferring upon Switzerland that glory which was due to France.

In general, however, the sporadic colonies formed of this civic artisan element, not being so numerously peopled from the mother country as was Geneva, do not remain so long distinct. A few generations suffice to merge the colonists into the general mass of the population among which they settle, though the influence which they exercise in moulding the character of that population is always singularly marked. But if the mother country from which these democratic offshoots are compelled to emigrate has itself previously founded colonies, or acquired territory upon which it is desirous to found colonies, and if those colonies are free from the persecutions of the mother country, then the civic artisan emigrants settle in the rising colonies where their mother tongue is spoken, where land is cheap and labour dear.

In the history of the Greek colonies this frequently happened. The progeny of the Greek military adven-

turers and the women of the country, commercial and free from aristocratic prejudices, were only too glad to welcome to their cities the new Greeks who brought with them the arts and crafts of the mother country.

When parties fighting for principles and not merely personal rivalry arose in England, and defeated or persecuted factions sought peace in flight, at first the emigrants, in default of flourishing English colonies, went to the Hanse Towns, Switzerland, and Holland*, and became lost in the native populations, which, though alien by blood, were in points of opinion and of practical life more congenial, or by permitting freedom of religion more hospitable, than the rest of the English; but no extensive emigration took place till the time of the persecutions on account of conscience set on foot by the warm churchmen in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., and by that time the attempts of the old statesmen to plant flourishing colonies in New England, which had hitherto been abortive, had yet furnished to English emigrants a territory where some members of our race dwelt and our language was spoken. To America, therefore, the English Puritans ultimately went; and during the civil wars, and again on the Restoration, large numbers of each faction, worsted in turn, sought the plantations of Virginia, Barbadoes, New England, and Jamaica.† There they long dwelt in settlements apart: the Roman Catholics in free Maryland, where men might worship as they pleased; the Puritans in New England, exacting from all who settled among them that conformity to their own tenets which they had so bitterly refused to give to the tenets of others at home.

Various as the paths taken by colonies of this kind at

* Davenant, Works, ii. 5.

† Child on Trade, 198. Davenant's Discourses, pt. ii. disc. 3. beg. See the account of the Brownists, who first settled in Leyden and afterwards went to New Plymouth, in Robertson's Works, xi. 270. sqq.

first sight appear, they are yet nothing but particular parts of the standard national development traversed by communities shorn of some social elements which are necessary to a complete development. These colonies are founded principally by an energetic democratic element. They plant the very essence of democracy in their new homes, wholly unalloyed with aristocracy or with theocracy. If the colony is sluggish, it retains unchanged the characteristics which were first planted in it. Such is the case with French Canada, where the peasant proprietors live like their ancestors who first emigrated, but with less energy. If the colony, on the contrary, is energetic and progressive, what is the result? It takes up the course of national progress at the very point at which the mother country is arrived, and advances from that differently from the mother country only because the force and vigour of the advancing democratic element is not checked by aristocracy, monarchy, or theocracy. Such colonies have all the merits and demerits of democracy, either unalloyed, or alloyed only by plutocracy, energy degenerating into restlessness, invention and love of discovery degenerating into a rage for novelty, attention to commerce and profit degenerating into materialism and utilitarianism, social equality and absence of restraint degenerating into licence and a disregard of the decencies of life. At their first burst into life, these nations show more of democracy, and its good and evil, than the mother country at any time has shown; because, unless by some catastrophe which is possible, but has never yet occurred, the democracy of the mother country never gets entirely free of aristocracy, monarchy, or theocracy, before it is again tempered by plutocracy. In the colonies democracy is wholly unalloyed at first, but eventually, as wealth increases, then plutocracy, with its good and its evil, comes to leaven the democratic mass, and the colony takes its place in the rank of nations among communities where democracy and plutocracy are the only social elements;

nor is there always, when this stage arrives, much difference to be discerned between communities where aristocracy, monarchy, and theocracy have once existed and been eradicated, and communities which have started up as colonies on a new soil and never possessed these social elements.

This view will explain how it happens that a colony is often said to be in advance of the mother country. At the epoch of the foundation of these colonies, the nation in fact divides into two or more branches, and as national progress has then arrived at the point where commerce and provision for luxury, not arms or literature, are the chief employments, the colonies are often able to outstrip the parent branch, because the latter is impeded in its progress by the remains of the feudal theocratic régime* which still lingers in it, while the colonies are wholly free to follow the new direction of enterprise and to enjoy the fullest liberty, and doing so they are affected by the appropriate social characteristics; so that while the mother country goes through the remaining stages of national development more slowly, the colony gets the start of it, and runs rapidly but less completely through them: colonies thus gaining an advance before the mother country, exercise a great influence on its development. From the community of origin, even without legislative restrictions, the communications of the colony with the mother country are very frequent and intimate. The colony, if it thrives, thrives entirely by the development of democratic principles and employments, and the relations of the colony are with the democratic or plutocratic elements at home. The effect of a flourishing colony of this class is, therefore, naturally to give greater strength to, and urge on the advance of, the democratic and plutocratic elements at home; and it is their advance alone

* It is a mark of an advanced stage to be rid of theocratic intolerance. Our colonies in America had effected this long before it was effected in England. See Child on Trade, p. 217.

which at that stage conduces to the development of the mother country.

4. Again we return to the development of the mother country, taking now a stage later in its existence, and marking the different character of the colonies which it then sends out.

The change in the development of the mother country is marked by the greater expansion of commerce. Great and adventurous merchants arise, either by the success of small tradesmen, which, giving them capital, enables them to embark in large and new enterprises ; or by the transformation of the old feudal nobles into merchants, who start at once with large capital, and a love of grand and dashing adventures.

In the first case the excess of competition in the small home trades and manufactures creates the necessity, as the possession of capital provides the means, of the resort to foreign trade. In the other case, the nobles prefer, if they must be traders, to be traders on a great scale, and astonish the people at home by the daring of their adventures and the wonderful products and fabrics which they bring from foreign countries, rather than employ themselves in the vending of home goods.

The result of this trade, when the inhabitants of the countries whose products and fabrics the merchants desire to purchase and bring home are rude and uncivilised and little accustomed to the settled life of traders themselves, is the establishment of a colony, and it takes place in this wise : The traders go out with a cargo of goods or money, as the case may be, and endeavour to persuade the natives to exchange for what they bring goods of their own, which the traders think suitable to bring home and sell to their own countrymen. For these adventures, partnerships, consisting of a small number of persons, are formed ; and if the nations are well disposed to enter into commerce, the adventurers find it convenient to leave some of their body in a little settlement there.

Thus a commercial station is formed, which the traders intend only to last so long as their trade may be profitable, and which is inhabited by persons who do not mean to abjure their native country, but go out and live for a while in the service of the merchants in these new settlements, all intending eventually to return ; for the real population of these settlements consists of persons hired by the merchants as labourers, artisans, menial servants, or overseers for limited terms of service ; though they are not seldom tempted to stay by peculiar rewards of service, such as the grant of a house or a piece of land. These persons are of course generally selected from that class of labouring persons without capital and without hope of flourishing at home, which forms the sediment of all colonies. We find them following in the train of the crusading knights ; we find them going with the military conquerors of Spain and Portugal. They were the material with which our Elizabethan statesmen attempted to fill their premature colonies, and they manned the ships, and afterwards stayed to plough the lands, of the Pilgrim Fathers ; and now, when in a later stage the merchant princes have need of men to fill their factories, they seek them from that same class, — a class which never has wealth or power enough to form colonies of its own proper motion, but which always supplies the great substratum in the colonies founded by the classes I have mentioned.

These stations generally originate from the individual exertions of the traders who seek to benefit by them. In time they are frequented by other traders and their dependents, and need law and police, all which are most easily supplied by the government of the mother country sending out a viceroy to administer its laws in the new settlement, or by granting to a company of merchants a monopoly of trade and a right to govern. For there is one distinction which, if properly apprehended, lets in a flood of light upon this subject. The earlier colonies

which we previously mentioned, were founded by men desiring to live in the new settlements, and therefore in most cases desiring also to have at least some share in their own government; these, on the contrary, are founded by traders merely as outlying stations for their own trade. They seek no emancipation from the mother country, but rather crave its protection, and in fact many of those interested in the new settlements never leave the mother country at all. And as for the dependents who go out as servants of the merchants, no thought of self-government, or having more political action than they had before they went out, enters their heads.

It often, in consequence of the insecurity of the surrounding country, becomes necessary to convert these stations into forts, and for this, of course, the aid of the mother country is particularly needed; and frequently the mother country, when from some internal cause a mass of the poor population at home becomes discontented, sends them out to these old commercial stations to strengthen them, and thus adds to a colony belonging to the class which we are now engaged in describing, a colony belonging to the class which naturally belongs to the state of progress of the mother country more advanced than that in which traders found these commercial stations; and in this manner a certain degree of confusion is introduced, which, till cleared, hinders our just appreciation of these colonies, and one which is indeed incident to all inquiries into the nature of colonies; for a particular spot having been selected to receive a colony sent out in one stage of the national progress, often receives a colony sent out by the same country in a more advanced stage; and the result is the blending of two colonies of different character, because proceeding from the mother country at different stages of its existence.

In ancient history a clear example of the commercial-garrison colonies is furnished by the colonies of Carthage in the interior as well as on the coast of Africa, and in Sicily,

and Spain. They are to be distinguished from the colonies of the Phœnicians, which, in some instances, like Carthage itself, were caused by civil discords, and therefore belong to the class of colonies just mentioned, and they are to be distinguished also from the colonies founded by Hanno, which were drawn from the country people for some purpose not very clearly understood by moderns, and not from the town-rabble of Carthage and the allied cities, whence the population of the commercial stations of the Carthaginians was derived.*

The first to found this class of colonies in modern times, were the merchant-nobles of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, for these were the first nations, in modern Europe, which followed this kind of foreign commerce. Their earliest settlements on the coasts of the Levant and Egypt, were mere mercantile stations, but they were soon compelled by the attacks of the neighbouring inhabitants to fortify them, and put them under the immediate superintendence of the home executive. The Genoese colonies in Cyprus, and at Pera, Galata, and the Crimea, and the Pisan colonies in Cogliari are among the earliest specimens in modern Europe of this kind of colonisation. The colonies of the Venetians in the Ionian Islands, Candia and Cyprus, though serving no doubt as a protection to commerce, belong rather to the class of colonies to be next mentioned.

The colonies of the crusaders in Palestine were, so far as the Italians assisted to found them, plantations of this description. The Venetians seized the opportunity of the great concourse to the Holy Land to extend their commercial stations into Syria and its neighbourhood. They cared nothing for the fanaticism of the expeditions, and held the papal legate in poor reverence; they only

* Heeren, *Researches*, iv. 93. The later Athenian colonies were also of this description. The colonies founded by Pericles in Thrace, and in the islands and ports of the Ægean, were garrison colonies.—See Grote, vi. 12—19.

used the crusades as a means of profit, and hoped by their assistance to found stations in the Holy Land, which might increase and develope their trade. Tyre is a well-known example of the colonies they founded with the assistance of the crusaders *, and all the crusaders' colonies bore more or less of this character given to them by the Venetians, Genoese, and Pisans, who joined in founding them. Indeed the Italians never had any other species of colonies except this and the next; for the pursuits of commerce were opened to the military noblesse by their own determination to become traders, just at the time when if they had not done so, they would have sent out military colonies, and the party spirit of the Italian republics, though carried to an excessive degree of violence, did not cause the foundation of a class of colonies appropriate to nations in this stage of their existence, except in some few instances, as the emigration of the silk manufacturers from Lucca to Venice in 1309; but the consequence was the foundation of sporadic colonies, which were soon absorbed. It was not till the development of the turn for commerce with distant countries, that the Italian states of modern Italy became commercial.

Of all the colonies of this kind in modern times, none are more exact specimens and more instructive than the Dutch. That people never had any colonies of the earlier descriptions. Their military noblesse was too small in number, and too much employed in Spanish affairs, to have the need to send its younger branches to new countries, and the ejected parties from Holland did not settle in a new country and preserve their Dutch individuality; but settling in England, Prussia, Denmark, and other countries, were after a time merged in the populations of those countries, and these forced emigrations were in truth before the establishment of the Dutch republic, and the effect not of a struggle between rival parties in a

* Michaud, *Hist. des Crois.* ii. 61, 63, 67. See also Daru, *Histoire de Venise*, l. ii. c. 34—42.

free country, but of the Spanish oppressions. After the Dutch had made themselves a separate nation in Europe, there was scarcely any inducement to emigrate, the customs and interest being low in Holland, and trade being in every way encouraged, gave sufficient employment, not only to all their own people, but even to a multitude of foreigners, so that so far from any being compelled to emigrate from want of subsistence, they could admit strangers to come in and earn subsistence for themselves; and their tolerance of all religions made no sect unhappy at home, or drove it into voluntary or involuntary exile; while the excellent social arrangements of the Dutch, provided so well at home for the employment of those few whom recklessness or misfortune had reduced to the condition of absolute paupers, that there was no need to send them abroad.* It is also remarked that the Dutch were peculiarly provident in deferring marriage till they had a fair prospect of being able to support all their children; and in consequence of the greater part of the population being engaged in sedentary occupations, and a very small number in agriculture, the rate of mortality was always very high in Holland, a circumstance which might also be attributed to the unhealthiness of their damp and marshy country.† De Witt, in a chapter replete with the spirit of true statesmanship, argues in the affirmative of the proposition, that it would be very advantageous for the rulers and people of Holland, and for traffic and commerce as well as navigation, to erect Dutch colonies in foreign countries, urging that in all countries there will be found many poor distressed persons thrown out of employment by sickness, wars, and the change of market prices; and that discontent must naturally be excited in the hearts of many well-to-do persons by the oligarchical form of government, for none being by birth excluded from it, those who are not rich or powerful enough to get elected to the offices, will

* Child, *New Discourse of Trade*, 4th ed. pp. 211, *sqq.*

† Malthus, *Population*, i. 443—446.

become out of humour, and speak ill of the government and individual rulers, and thus form a nucleus for seditions and insurrections, in which the rabble are always ready to join. The expediency of planting colonies like those of Tyre, Carthage, Greece, Rome, Spain, and Portugal, to give vent to these malcontents and over-taxed people, is obvious; and the benefit that would result to Holland from planting commercial stations in foreign places, especially India, might be expected to be as great as the benefit which their colonies had produced to the countries just named. He then exposes the severe and slavish terms imposed by the companies of Holland, which had in effect obtained a monopoly of colonisation, upon all who went out to their foreign factories, insomuch that none but the most wasteful and lazy of the Dutch would go out to them; and the companies were obliged to fill their factories with ignorant, slavish-minded, debauched foreigners; while, on the contrary, the Dutch are, by their maritime habits, and their ingenuity, frugality, and industry, more fitted than any other nation in the world to plant and settle in colonies, and had, in fact, made many new colonies in Prussia, Pomerania, Denmark, Sleswick, France, England, Flanders, and other countries.

These latter colonies which De Witt mentions were in fact the only colonies founded by spirited and industrious Dutch artisans and merchants; but being sporadic and settled among foreign nations, they in a few generations lost their Dutch character, and were fused with the nations in which they settled. When Holland became plutocratic, there were no thriving, energetic, industrious persons who were desirous to emigrate, none such as found the colonies of nations where aristocracy, theocracy, and sometimes also monarchy, thwart the rising democratic spirit; the only emigrants of Holland were the poorer spiritless class who, coming to no good at home, were willing to fill the factories and commercial stations founded by the Dutch traders both in the East and the

West Indies, for the purpose of establishing a new trade between Europe and the Indies, and of taking away the eastern trade from the Portuguese. Of these the Cape only was colonised by Dutch peasants, the object for which, in 1672, they were sent there being to cultivate and sell fresh provisions to the Dutch ships who touched there on the way between Europe and the Indies.

The settlements thus formed were under the rule of the government or the companies, or the private speculators to whom the government granted them, and never reached any power or importance; indeed, the companies of the east seem to have feared and systematically stunted the growth of the settlements which they founded, as in the instance of the Cape settlements, whose territory was extended by the Boors against the remonstrance of the government both at home and the Cape. Though the settlements of the Dutch, particularly those in the west, have been the source of great opulence to the mother country, and the settlers have increased in numbers and wealth to be themselves important, they have never risen into flourishing communities fit for independence, unless the influx of foreign settlers, and the transfer of the government to another state, has so altered the place as to make it lose its old character. So long as they have remained Dutch they have always possessed the characteristics of settlements made merely for the commercial benefit of the mother country, and never freed themselves from the character of mere dependencies upon the executive.

The only colonies of the French which have been at all successful were of this class; their plantations in the West Indies, many of which were originally founded by individual pirates or traders like St. Domingo*, and remaining their property, were, at the instance of Colbert, purchased by the government and annexed to the crown

* See Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, ii. 471; and Raynal, *Hist. Phil.* iii. 25, 32, 42, 52, 53, 54.

of France as integral parts of the empire.* They continued with the other plantations made by the crown of France to be filled by owners and overseers, who sought to make by slave-labour as large a fortune as they could in the colony, which they regarded as a place of temporary exile, and to enjoy that fortune in France†, and in this they were like the great majority of our own West Indian proprietors.‡

The French settlements in North America, from the commencement of the seventeenth century, were at first of the same class. They were founded for the purpose of establishing and supporting a trade in peltry, and in the fish caught off that coast, and not for the purpose of filling them with settlers to live there as in a new home on the culture of the soil.§ Subsequently, however, the emigrants to French Canada gave to it the character of an agricultural settlement, but no colony of France ever reached a prosperous independence.||

5. The last colonies of all are in some respects akin to those which we have just sketched, but differ in three particulars:—First, they are founded not by the individual efforts of traders or buccaneers, but by the government of the mother country. Secondly, the principal object of their foundation is to remove from home that portion of the populace which suffers directly by the pressure of population on the means of subsistence. Thirdly, no portion of the emigrants (except the officers of government) who go out to these latest colonies, intend to return as do the great majority of the traders and overseers in the former kind of colonies.

The persons by whom these colonies are filled belong

* In 1664. See Heeren, *Political System*, i. 250.

† Heeren, *Political System*, i. 319; Ed. Rev. viii. 388.

‡ Brougham, *Colonies*, i. 46, *sqq.* 68.

§ Heeren, *Political System*, i. 141, 252.

|| See Everett, *ap. Lieber Civil Liberty*, p. 289. See also De Tocqueville, *Démoc. en Amérique*, ii. 427.

to the class which I have already pointed out as the substratum of all colonies—the most indigent of the labouring classes, and the least connected with the classes above them. They never found colonies themselves, but when other classes colonise they join the emigration in hopes of finding a better home. Thus, in the crusades and the early military colonies of ancient and modern nations, the emigrating aristocracy lead in their train the loose rabble of the nation, though in those early ages there being no large towns, almost each person in the lower population has his relationship of serf or servant or other dependent upon some member of the noble race, and there is scarcely any such class as that which arises in the later ages of a nation, and hanging loose in the streets of a great capital, without a tie of any kind to any fellow-creatures better than themselves, with no thought and no hope of anything but the mere acquisition of this day's bread and this night's lodging, forms that inflammable material which any spark of discontent from any section of a higher class will immediately make to burst into a revolution. The germs of this class, the comparatively few individuals who are loosened from all ties of dependence and cannot acquire possessions however small, which would give them a new tie of affections and of interest, avail themselves of the colonies founded by the military aristocrats, or by the citizens who have emigrated for liberty; and when aristocratic statesmen, or private individuals, applying by a common mistake institutions useful for one stage to nations in another stage, prematurely found colonies, as did our Elizabethan statesmen, it is by this class, and by malefactors generally members of this class by birth and education, that these premature colonies are filled; but these are not the materials out of which flourishing and energetic colonies can be formed, and it is above all things important to remember that the only appropriate colonies founded before the national acme, and

during the earlier period of the acme, are neither founded by nor for this class, but are created by the individual and active energy of higher orders, either the young unattached noblesse, or freedom-loving farmers and citizens who by their industry and self-denial have collected some little capital and desire to enjoy it in liberty and to increase it by their unthwarted toils.

When in the course of national progress the mother country has arrived at the stage when large towns abound, when social ties are loosened, when large armies suddenly disbanded overcrowd the labour market, when all the surplus population of the country flows naturally into the towns, and many through idleness or misfortunes unable to attain wealth or luxury fall out of humour with the constitution of things and found a "dangerous class," then a new need for colonisation arises differing from all the others by this most important distinction, that it is the need of a class which, not emigrating of its own spontaneous movement and having indeed hardly means to do so, requires the assistance of the government, or as is more often the case, it is the need of the government to get rid of a class which cannot harmonise with existing institutions, and this arises at the time when in the course of national progress centralisation has gained considerable power, and the line is being drawn sharply between governors and governed. When the distinction is established, the government has no plainer duty to the governed than to carry to new climes the worst scum of the town rabble, whose presence at home causes disturbance and disorder, while their settlement abroad may establish new commercial stations and new garrisons on the frontiers of civilisation.

The colonies so founded may be most properly called—to distinguish them from the earlier colonies—plantations, though in common parlance that term is applied also to other kinds of colonies. According to the genius of the mother country, its plantations are either commercial

stations, or garrisons in conquered countries, or both combined.

The later Roman colonies belong to the class of plantations. In Rome, after the expulsion of the kings, there were in reality but two social powers, the patricians and plebeians. Gradually all true characteristics of aristocracy departed from the patricians, and at the same time the old sturdy independence and civic virtue departed from the plebeians, then the patricians and the rich plebeians became a mere gay luxurious plutocracy, who cultivated their estates and filled their factories with slaves; the poor plebeians, on the other hand, becoming every day poorer, were obliged by debt to sell their little farms, and found no avenue of honest industry by which they could retrace their steps to independence; all those employments of trade which in modern nations have led to the power and wealth of the townspeople, were performed by slaves, and the poorer citizens had scarcely any occupation by which to live except serving in the army. The city was therefore filled with a hungry and turbulent population of poor freemen, often too numerous to be exhausted by the levies. Every now and then a stern cry arose for an agrarian law, a demand that the great lands of the plutocracy should be divided among the poorer citizens. The need of employing this troublesome crowd led to the later Roman conquests; the result of those conquests was the acquisition by the government of large provinces, and when the agrarian clamours periodically arose, the government, which consisted of members of the plutocracy, assuaged it for the time by dividing their provinces among the citizens, passing a *lex* to settle some of them in little garrison towns among the conquered people. These *propugnacula imperii* were the later Roman colonies so much talked of and so little understood. Not one of them ever came to any glory or took any important part in the world's affairs until, as in the case of Florence, fresh blood from other nations had

been infused into it, and till it in fact had ceased to be a Roman colony. For they were not composed of energetic self-acting citizens, but were formed by a plutocracy to get rid of a troublesome town rabble, and to preserve the newly conquered territories. The Roman colonists never formed in their new homes fresh and independent communities, like the early colonies of Greece, or like the United States of America, but lived under the dreary rule of the functionaries appointed by their old government. It was the curse of the Roman, says Davenant* truly, that he could nowhere escape his government; he who was oppressed by a Roman emperor could retire nowhere but into the arms of death.

The colonies of the Athenians in Eubœa†, in Ægina‡, and in Melos §, may be classed among the garrison plantations. In antiquity, however, the Carthaginian state presents the most striking examples of plantations by a plutocracy. The commerce of Carthage, carried on by sea, rendered it necessary to establish trading depots in the nations with which the Carthaginians traded. These nations were rude and had imperfect ideas on the rights of property. It was necessary therefore for Carthage to convert its maritime stations into forts, and these were instances of the class of colonies last mentioned. We know so little of the interior history of Carthage as to be unable to say whether the need of disposing of a troublesome population was the primary object of the Carthaginian plutocracy in founding colonies, but a vent of that kind needed to be constantly kept open in a nation where commercial prosperity must have produced its usual increase of population, where the territory was so confined, and where a peculiar prejudice made the native Carthaginians refuse to serve in arms. The main object, however, of the late Carthaginian colonies, founded as they

* Works, ii. 6.

† Thucyd. ii. 27.

‡ Thucyd. i. 114.

§ Thucyd. v. 116.

were, not by individual traders, but by the plutocratic government, was to turn the poor and discontented citizens of the capital into contented men of wealth*, and these citizens in their new home were useful in establishing a fresh depot for Carthaginian commerce. The object was equally accomplished by filling the old maritime depots with the poorer citizens and allowing them to overrun and conquer the surrounding territory, as was the case in Spain, where the Carthaginians began as merchants and ended as conquerors. Most of these plantations, and certainly those placed near Carthage, were kept in strict dependence upon the home government †, as were the later Roman colonies, and like them also, none of the Carthaginian plantations ever attained any great degree of power or importance.

In the same manner the great plutocracy of modern Europe began by founding commercial stations by the assistance of the Crusaders, but latterly sent out these garrison colonies, more to ease the population at home than to protect commerce abroad. Large territories on the shores of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the coast of Syria, the greater part of the Peloponnesus, and islands of importance, such as Candia, Corfu, and almost all the Cyclades which came into the hands of the Venetians, accidentally, if we may so speak, as the result of the crusades, were kept in submission by a few hundred Venetian families, which, oppressed and poor at home, were glad to find themselves at ease and in a position of comparative importance in the garrison colonies of the conquered dependencies of Venice. Allotments were

* Aristot. Polit. ii. 11; and vi. 5, p. 317. Heeren, Carthaginians, pp. 39 and 93.

† Heeren, Carthaginians, pp. 40—93. The early Phœnician colonies established by Tyre, Sidon, and other states, founded when the mother states were in their acme, such as Attica and Carthage itself, were allowed to become independent, and belonged in all respects to No. 3. —Humboldt, *Nouv. Esp.* iv. 285; Heeren, *id.* ii.

granted to the families of the plutocracy, who thus increased their revenue, and others were granted to families of Venetian artisans who settled upon them. Emigration was not the spontaneous act of the colonists.

The Dutch, again, as we have seen in De Witt's time, had none but the factory commercial-station colonies; but after his age it became necessary for the plutocracy of Holland, in order to get rid of the scum of the town population, to found plantations. Instead, however, of sending them to the other hemisphere, the government of Holland has planted them on the lands reclaimed from the sea.

The removal of the discontented poor is the only cause of colonisation in the last stationary state of nations. It is not an uncommon circumstance, and one capable of clear explanation, for the nations in this state to decrease in population without the effects of famine, war, or pestilence; but when they do not decrease rapidly enough, and remain at home clamouring "*Panem et circenses*," then the course of the government in its effort to "*tranquillise*" the people, is either to enlist these men in the army and wage wars merely for their employment, or to deport them to some colony. The later Roman colonies and the French colony in Algeria were caused by this necessity.

China is a monarchy in this stage of existence, and from its excess of population and lack of new modes of employment, needs colonisation. The government is too poor to organise colonies; the discontented poor, as I have said, never colonise without assistance, and the consequence is a desultory emigration of the most wretched Chinese, who cannot find food at home, to the coasts of the eastern ocean, where they do not settle apart and found independent Chinese colonies. Most of them die within two years of their departure from China, and the survivors enter into the service of foreigners and quickly disappear.

The last two species of colonies are miserably unromantic in their origin and inglorious in their results. In the history of the earlier colonies there are frequently touches of the truest poetry. A band of brave and young knights, the best blood of the kingdom, quitting their fathers' halls, and the state and luxury in which they had been brought up, to win by their valour in distant and strange lands a new domain, and add to the brotherhood of civilised nations one so prosperous and energetic as to arrive at its acme, and take part in advancing human knowledge while the mother country is still almost inglorious ; — this forms a history striking even to the most torpid imagination. Again, the members of a defeated political party, tearing themselves away with their wives and families, and such of their possessions as they can gather together, to traverse a world of waters, and to plant on a desert shore, or among hostile savages, a little likeness of their loved birthplace, with the old names and the old habits, but with a government according to the principles for which they fought so vainly, and this home of freedom becoming the refuge of oppressed industry throughout the world, in time taking its place as a great and mighty nation, proving to the old persecutors of its founders the practical worth of the institutions and the liberty which they proscribed : — this, too, is a picture full of thrilling interest.

But here the romance of colonisation ends. These commercial or garrison colonies are founded by traders who never mean to stay there, and look upon them only as shops or factories to make money out of, and are filled with the worst specimens of the labouring class at home. Settlements so founded, or plantations by a central government, to get rid of the superabundant scum of the towns never come to any glorious result. So long as the mother country continues its trade, or holds the conquered dependencies, these settlements are maintained ; but when the trade of the mother country declines, or its

revenue is too low to keep up the garrisons, they die out and vanish as the Italian settlements in the Ionian Islands, Cyprus, Sardinia, Egypt, and the Crimea have done, or are transferred to the next nation which succeeds to the acme, and with it to the supremacy of trade and foreign sovereignty, as the Portuguese military settlements in the East were subsequently acquired by the trading Dutch, which gave to some of the Dutch settlements an air of being conquerors' garrisons; whereas the Dutch only maintained what the Portuguese had founded*, and the Dutch settlements have in turn mostly fallen into the hands of the English.

One cause of the decay of these settlements, at the same time as the mother country, is the restriction upon their trade. The very object of their foundation was to assist the trade of the mother country, and when that fails their object ceases; and the colony has generally no means of opening up a trade with other countries, except by becoming the dependency of a new nation, like the Portuguese and Dutch colonies just mentioned.

The only colonies of antiquity which were forbidden by the mother country to trade with any other nation than itself were the Carthaginian. The prohibition was very natural, for the Carthaginian colonies were planted in order to be fortified stations, nuclei for collecting the commerce of the surrounding countries for the benefit of Carthage and its merchants. It would have been a stultification of the object of their foundation to have allowed these nuclei to have traded with the rivals of Carthage. The Carthaginian colonies were the only colonies of antiquity so forbidden, because they were the only colonies of antiquity founded with this object.†

The first colonies of modern Europe were those of the

* "Les Portugais trafiquèrent aux Indes en conquérans. Les lois gênantes que les Hollandais imposent aujourd'hui aux petits princes Indiens sur le commerce, les Portugais les avaient établies avant eux."—*Montesquieu, L'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxi. c. xxi.

† *Montesquieu, L'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxi. c. xxi.

Italian republics, then in the stage of mingled democracy and plutocracy ; and like the Carthaginian colonies, they were founded for the purpose of being commercial stations, and bound to conduct their trade according to the interests of the mother country. The Dutch factories in India, the Brazilian colonies of the Portuguese, and the French plantations, were in their origin the same. In none of these, though it might be unwise economically, was the provision unnatural or the cause of any serious complaint.* The restriction, though, to be complete, it ought not only to forbid the importation of goods into the colony from foreign countries, but also the exportation of produce from the colony to any other but the mother country, has seldom been maintained in its integrity, except in the case of the exportation of the precious metals from Spanish America, and of spices from the Dutch spice islands. Practically the restriction has been limited to importation. This is the more unnatural of the two, and particularly when it is imposed not on a mere factory garrison, but on a large population capable of independent existence ; for the idea of raising up a new nation for no other purpose but to be the customers of an old one, is a revolting device of national selfishness. The object, however, of the rich Spaniard, settled in America, and of his descendants, was to become rich by the use of the natural resources of the country, such as the mines and agricultural products, and to become members of the resident plutocracy of Spanish America. Fortunes were made with sufficient rapidity, and to a vast extent in Spanish America, by the operation of internal industry, and without need of foreign travel ; and the degraded state of mind into which centuries of the rule of absolute monarchy and theocracy had reduced them, prevented their effectively rebelling against this restriction.

The influence of colonies of the trading or government-

* That the restriction was imposed by the Dutch, French, and Portuguese, see Child on Trade, p. 210.

plantation class, on the mother country, is greater than that of the colonies of any previous period. The trading colonies, by which I mean such as those of France, England, and Holland in the West Indies, are merely means for increasing the wealth of individuals, and the persons so enriched are generally town plutocrats. They either return as quickly as they can from the place where, by trade or mining or commercial agriculture, they have made their fortune, to their native place, or they live at home entirely, and commit to their agents the task of making a profit out of their property. If they are not also landed proprietors in their own country, they live in splendid idleness in towns, the most signal examples of a useless plutocracy. Many of our West India proprietors were country gentlemen in England, and therefore we in great measure avoided that evil; but in other countries it is a general rule that the existence of such colonies as these has the political effect of increasing vastly the number and power of the plutocracy; and if they have themselves made their fortunes by slave-labour, of likewise debasing the character of the plutocracy, and through them of the whole nation. The Portuguese character was mainly depraved by these means; the Spanish has suffered, though somewhat less, because the colonists of Spain rather settled in America than returned to Spain. The Dutch and the French have been injured by this contamination, from which the English have not escaped.

Another and most potent influence is exercised on the mother country by the attention which is directed by the colonies established for the purpose of commercial agriculture to the extraction of the utmost amount of produce out of cultivated ground. When people speak of the agricultural colonies of the West Indies, something is meant quite different from an agricultural country like Norway or Sweden, where the crops are raised as the food of the men who raise them. The agricultural colonies are merely establishments for raising a great quantity

of produce in the cheapest manner in order to export it and enrich the owners of the establishments. No poet sings about the happy rural life in Jamaica or in Cuba ; the real cultivators of the earth are either slaves or the poorest of freemen, whose whole existence is devoted to extracting the utmost amount of produce, whether sugar or tobacco, or whatever other tropical plant may grow there, and for this they are paid wages which just enable them to subsist. Instead of being carried through a factory where the artisans sit in rows at a loom or a spinning-jenny making the articles of luxury they never will enjoy, you are taken through miles of sugar canes and coffee fields, where the naked cultivators are working with the same feeble spirit, the same miserable object, the same slack interest in their work, and the same hopelessness of enjoying what they produce, as the factory artisan. All idea of the pleasure of country life vanishes in such a scene, and one looks upon the land and the cultivators as part of the great machine for making the owner rich. The owner so regards them himself. If he, living as he often does in the mother country, is well imbued with the doctrine and principles by which his plantations in the colonies are cultivated, and he wishes to make more money than they produce, it is not unlikely that he will try something of the same system at home, and may buy a country manor, not to live there like an old Norman seigneur strong in the attachment and respect of the people, but to make as much money as he can out of it. This is the change in agriculture productive of great scientific improvements and destructive of the old quasi-feudal relations between landlord and tenant which, as I have noted in its proper place, frequently occurs in the development of the mother country ; and these agricultural trading colonies thus tend greatly to promote it, and thus influence the development of the mother country.

The colonies of this kind have a further effect on the mother country, and one unquestionably evil. They are

governed by functionaries from the mother country, and thus people living long in the colonies become accustomed to a despotic functionary government, while the patronage of so many offices and appointments gives an increased force to the central power, and the enlarged supply of places produces a numerous class of place-hunters. The evils of a centralised despotic functionarism beset these colonies almost necessarily, and it is jealously to be guarded against that they should not be the means of introducing that form of government into the mother country; a form of government which, as I have elsewhere noted, is one of the great evils impending over and threatening, in a manner the more dangerous because the more alluring, countries which are in the stage of mingled plutocracy and democracy.

The colonies of the last class—government plantations—are founded for a purpose of the mother country, and with a view to relieve it from a superfluous and discontented population. These necessarily, therefore, exercise in that respect a beneficial influence on the mother country; but being, like the last-mentioned, governed by a central despotic functionarism, there is the same danger arising from them to the mother country.

If colonies shall in future be classified according to the stage of national progress in which the mother countries were when they respectively sent them forth, there will be some chance of the reasons of the prosperity or the failure of colonies being at length understood. At present there is no subject upon which so much confusion exists, and resemblances accidental and trivial are made the basis of classifications which, instead of clearing, only further cloud the matter. It must be allowed, however, that the confusion is not altogether the fault of political writers, but is much owing to princes and statesmen who have attempted to found inappropriate colonies.

Of these, and the relation which they bear to colonies which are the natural consequences of the condition of the

mother country, it may be proper to add a few words. The earliest colonies go forth at the time when aristocracy and theocracy are the prevailing social elements. The young military nobles, settling in these new countries, maintain their pride of birth as long as they can without women of their own race, which is but for a generation or two, and they either impose their creed upon the conquered people or form a new mixed religion from the fusion of their own with that of the people of the country. Now, the Greek emigrants of this class adopted the latter course, for paganism had at least this advantage: that it was pliable; and the gods of the Greek nobles formed a united community with the gods of the native tribes of Asia Minor, in the same way as their respective worshippers fused into one harmonious population; and so in the course of time, when new immigrants, such as the ejected minorities from the mother states, flocked in, if their religion was at all different, either the differences were quietly dropped or they were allowed as quietly to change the belief of the colony. Theocracy was never socially troublesome among the Greeks, whatever it may have been among the Egyptians and Etrurians; and this is one reason why the Greeks so easily and speedily obtained their acme.

Now, the military aristocracy which founded the crusaders' colonies, and the military quasi-aristocracy which founded the colonies of Spain and Portugal, were altogether different in this respect. In the countries from which they emigrated theocracy was as powerful, if not more so, than aristocracy itself. The crusaders went at the bidding and as the servants of the theocracy, and the Spanish and Portuguese knights never forgot that they were soldiers of the faith, and compensated, in their own estimation, for all their crimes and cruelties by converting the Indians to their own creed.* The theocratic intolerance was moderated

* In this respect the Spaniard presents a curious contrast to the Puritan in America. The latter, though he emigrated for a religious reason, did little to convert the Indians.

in some degree in the colonies of Portugal ; as they became commercial, they admitted something of that religious freedom which is essential to a true national development. The Portuguese had, however, but a small share of it, and a stunted development, while the Spaniard never got free of his theocracy either at home or in his colonies. To those colonies never resorted men who fled from the countries of Europe to escape the tyranny of the Church *, nor were they enabled by the inroad of factions exiled from the mother country, eventually to rival it in the energy, spirit, and splendour of their independent exertions.

There was another check to their independence. The early Greeks (and in this respect the crusaders resembled them) went forth from nations where aristocracy was the ruling secular element ; monarchy was but an institution established by the aristocrats for the purpose of preserving national unity. A central government in the form in which it exists in later stages had no existence, and the young military noblesse who emigrated, if they found a central government necessary for the colony which they established, would erect one in the colony itself. Consequently, the early Greek colonies are wholly free from the mother country. They owe it affection and respect, but no allegiance ; and that was likewise the relation of the crusaders' colonies to their mother countries, except when the Italian commercial system prevailed.

But a wholly different state of things existed in Spain and Portugal. In neither of them was there a true aristocracy. In each the monarchy had established itself as the real secular element of the time. The quasi-aristocrats were but the courtiers that clustered round a military throne ; accustomed to fight in Europe for the joint glory of their king and their church, it was their pride to fight in the other hemisphere for the glory of the same masters. The central government never relaxed its

* Child, p. 203, 217.

hold upon the Spanish and Portuguese colonies till foreign interference and the deep decadence of the mother country changed the state of affairs. Till then they remained dependencies upon the executive. They are, therefore, classed by most writers with the garrison or commercial colonies, sent out by the strong central governments of a later stage of national development. But this is erroneous, for they were founded originally by the military quasi-noblesse, and not by the government. But this noblesse being in fact but a mere set of courtiers, and not receiving an influx of free and sturdy citizens like the Huguenots, or the Puritans, or the Greek ejected parties, never shook off the yoke of the home government, and formed, with a rapidity owing to the mines, plutocratic societies; and to such societies a strong central government and a gorgeous religion are not alien. Therefore the colonies of these two nations, never going through that stage of existence to which liberty, both civil and religious, is essential, passed at once from that early stage when monarchy and theocracy are the ruling elements, to the later stage when plutocracy, and a strong central government, and a gay religion are appropriate. And the theocracy of Spanish America came to be not an independent theocracy such as we have seen to flourish in the early history of nations, and to be a useful check to the monarchy, but came to be, like the theocracy of the despotism which marks the last stage of national existence, a mere branch of the despotic functionarism. From the place of the Archbishop to that of doorkeeper of the cathedral, all ecclesiastical office in America flowed directly from the king; and the priests were the strongest and most reliable of the despotic functionaries.

Now a central government regards a colonial dependency as useful principally for three purposes; to keep guard over conquered territories, to form safe marts at which the merchants of the mother country may trade with the native population, and send home their produce,

and to furnish a receptacle for discontents and malefactors.

The strong central government of Venice made its colonies useful for all three purposes; they were formed of discharged soldiers, and a town rabble accustomed to the central government at home, and well suited therefore for these purposes. The Portuguese and Spanish monarchies, as soon as their territory was acquired for them in the Indies by the military courtiers who went there, following the Italian example required the colonies to trade with no country in Europe but the mother country, and to hold their new territories, and what further territory they might acquire, for and on behalf of the home government. And thus the monarchy of Spain regarded Spanish America as an integral portion of their dominions, and exercising over them the same absolute dominion as it exercised over the mother country, forbade them to trade except with the mother country. The executive in Spanish America consisted of Spaniards sent out from Spain as governmental functionaries, and they of course were willing enough to enforce this decree. In this manner the Spanish colonies, though not formed of the same social elements as the Italian or the Carthaginian, came to have several of the same characteristics; and the Portuguese, whose first founders were of the Spanish type, while their immediate successors were more of the Italian, still more naturally assumed the characteristics of the latter.

The first English colonies were founded by adventurers and statesmen, who, perceiving the utility of colonies to the countries I have just named, thought it would be expedient for England to have similar appendages, and more particularly, those who favoured the growth of the monarchical power thought it desirable to found colonies which, like those of Spain and Portugal, might pay large tribute to the central government, without the intervention of Parliament. The colonies, though founded by the

funds of individuals (at least those in Elizabeth's reign were so), were, according to the scheme both of the adventurers who fitted out the expeditions and the statesmen who sanctioned them, to be mere dependencies of the executive; permitted to trade only with England, and required to receive whatever outcasts the English statesmen might think fit to pour into them.

The scheme languished, because the true colonising element for that stage of English history, the youth of a military aristocracy, was otherwise employed; the colonies showed no signs of flourishing till they were resorted to by the ejected parties in the civil wars. If the early colonies had been flourishing and revenue-paying bodies like those of Spain and Portugal, they might have destroyed the English constitution, by enabling the crown to raise its standing armies, and supply the expenses of government without the leave of Parliament. As it turned out, however, the colonies were insignificant till the ejected parties settled there, and then the hold of the executive relaxed, and the colonists enjoyed greater freedom than the people at home, especially in being allowed to profess whatever religion they chose. Had this gradual relaxation been allowed, as it ought to have been, to go on till complete liberty in point of trade and taxation had been added to the political freedom which the American colonies of England had since the restoration of Charles II. always enjoyed, England would have been spared the American revolution, which was caused entirely by the attempted retention of a system of restriction suited to the original colonists, the rabble and scum of the towns, but not suited to the bold citizens and farmers who had emigrated for liberty.*

England had no colonies strictly belonging to the earliest class. The United States of America, so far as they were founded by ejected parties, belong to the second class in

* Heeren, *Pol. Syst.* ii. 89.

the order of time, and of the trading class we have several specimens, not a few of them converted into garrisons, some founded by English settlers, others acquired by conquest from the Portuguese, Dutch, and other nations who had founded them in their appropriate stages.

The present emigration from England to its colonies is of two kinds: first, that of traders or employés, who go out to become rich by adventure, and intend eventually to return to England, which is the case with our Indian merchants and functionaries; and, secondly, that of poor settlers, who go to settle abroad, because they are ill-to-do and discontented at home. Many of these need government assistance, and receive it.

After this general survey we are in a position to answer the question—What are the possibilities of colonial history? They are, speaking in the gross, but two. First the colony, no matter at what period of national progress founded, if it becomes commercial and thrives and obtains independence, will present at first the characteristics of a society where democracy is the sole element, and subsequently of a society where democracy and plutocracy are the two secular forces. A colony then deserves to be treated as a separate nation, and is in effect the same as those nations which have arisen without monarchy, theocracy, or aristocracy, or which, having originally possessed those elements, or some of them, have succeeded in shaking them off entirely. This is the success which colonies can enjoy. It is the point in national progress at which they as it were break into the ranks of progressive and competing nations, and after that, their progress is subject to the same laws and the same vicissitudes as those which regulate the further progress of any other nation after that stage. Secondly, the colony, at whatever period it is founded, may remain an integral part of the mother country, and may have sharply drawn the line of governors and governed, the governors being the functionaries of the central government at home, who, invested

with power and the prestige of coming from a country refined, wealthy, and great—that country to which the colonists look up as the model in all matters of taste and refinement—look down with still more than the usual contempt on the governed, and there is no rich territorial aristocracy, with the pride of descent from a conquering race, to regard with scorn the upstart underlings of office. It takes no place in the rank of nations nor even touches the torch of human progress, but perishes with the mother country, and though in the ruin of the mother country accident may sever the colony from it, no change in substance is made. The colony like the mother country is the scene of alternate despotism and anarchy, till it subsides finally beneath a conqueror.

Of the first, the most prominent examples are the colonies of Greece in Italy and Asia Minor, and the United States of America. Of the second, the Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese colonies. In the midst of them stand some of our present colonies, now hovering between two destinies, doubtful to complete the independence, which most of them have begun, and to proceed along the track of national progress, or slavishly adhering to England, to submit to English governors, and to acquire a familiarity with the broad distinction between governors and governed which never fails finally to debase and degrade a community.

CHAP. XXX.

CHARITY IN POLITICS.

"In what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."—*Genesis* iii. 5.

"πάντα γὰρ καὶ καλὰ."—*SOPH. O. T.* 1516.

THERE is no fruit of the Tree of Knowledge on which men pride themselves so much as upon the power to discriminate good and evil. If knowledge followed transgression proportionately, Adam must have sinned imperfectly in tasting this fruit; for our knowledge of good and evil is slight in the extreme, and the slighter because we think it solid; but if it is a punishment for sin to think we know what we do not know then is the human race still suffering severely in this respect above all others for the first transgression.

There is no one who on hearing of an action, in watching a course of policy, in viewing a system of government does not take upon himself to pronounce that it is good or it is evil, and yet men's judgments in such things are ever at variance, for each judges by the code of laws that his education, his habits, his companions have formed within his own mind. There may be perhaps abstract good and abstract evil, but who shall be sure when he knows it?

Now in this long course of change that we have traced, however imperfectly, phase after phase has come upon

the stage, and I have endeavoured to sketch it as dispassionately as may be, knowing full well that each has its admirers and its detractors, and that I am perhaps not more free from the prejudices of my time and country than those around me. The great chain of human events consists of an infinity of atoms; each atom, I make bold to say, has a good and an evil side to it. He who undertakes to describe the whole chain or any large portion of it, may pick out sometimes the good, sometimes the evil.—“Ogni medaglio ~~ha~~ *ha* suo reverso,” and thus a thousand persons describing a course of history, which is often a sequence of tableaux, each having, like a medal, its obverse of good and its reverse of evil, may describe the sequence in ten thousand different ways by perpetually interchanging the obverse and reverse of the medals, each choosing according to his taste the obverse of one and the reverse of another, and unless two men are all optimist or all dyslogist the chances are infinite against the agreement of their descriptions and opinions.

As Englishmen, we believe constitutional monarchy to be the best form of government; but are we sure that in thus erecting it into the abstract ideal we are not carrying into the tribunal, on which cosmopolites alone should sit, some of our English opinions and English sympathies? and shall we not be confirmed in this, if we find that other men of other nations have carried to the same tribunal the feelings and prejudices of their homes, and the common wish of discontented humanity to praise the absent and the half-known? and thus the judgments of mankind are various and uncertain, for the impartial judge exists not. Every phase that I have described has a decision in its favour. Is it Rousseau who pronounces? Then we know that the tribe-stage is the only moral natural state of man; all others are morbid in proportion as they differ from it. Let the tribesmen settle into peaceful agriculturists, and then a thoughtful man who

looks to the happiness of the individual believes that a better state of society than any other has been achieved. It is the traveller in Norway who sees perfection in this stage of national life. If an invasion comes, and feudal aristocrats seize all the power of the state, then are Lycurgus and the Comte de Boulainvilliers satisfied, provided all progress, whether of royal authority or popular liberty, is successfully repressed. Does the monarchy that grows out of the noblesse override all other powers? then Fénelon and Hume believe that the nation enjoys the perfection of government. Are the feudal powers destroyed, and is a strong centralised monarchy combined with municipal liberty? then D'Argenson proclaims the realisation of the ideal. When this contingency is avoided, and the great secular powers are evenly balanced and enabled to exist by a government of compromise, Tacitus and Montesquieu lead a chorus of English voices proclaiming constitutional monarchy to be the queen of governments. Is another phase before us where commercial and intellectual progress come rapidly to bloom under a democratic system, and amid the crash of a falling aristocracy? let us hear the historian of Pericles seeking to assimilate all nations to that condition. Shall an unalloyed plutocracy receive the palm of those who assume to judge fairly between all governments? then should M. Comte be upon the judgment-seat. Or, lastly, if it is an absolute monarchy founded on perfect equality that contends for the pre-eminence, there are Hobbes and Spinoza to decide in its favour.

From all these judgments I will appeal to that higher tribunal which made the very things that we pretend to compare and judge, and if I read aright the decree that called them into existence, that decree declares that each form of government is good and necessary in its turn, and that, as in all the works of creation, there is blended good and evil, so no form of government is wholly evil, unless when imposed upon a nation unfitted for it. When the

government suits the social conditions of the nation, then is the greatest amount of good which exists in that government brought into play, and then is that government the best of any which can be established in the nation.

It will therefore be advancing charity as well as knowledge, if, instead of speculating on the best form of government in the abstract, and condemning all but the favoured form, men of learning and ability employed themselves in ascertaining what forms of government are most appropriate to the different social conditions and phases through which nations pass.

Contempt is the mark of an undeveloped mind, not able to sympathise with the good which is in the thing or the person contemned. So contempt in politics is a mark of an illiberal and narrow understanding, whether it be entertained by philosophers unable to appreciate any form of government but the one towards which alone their sympathies are developed, or whether it be in nations unable to appreciate the merits of other nations in a different stage of development from their own.

To one who places himself upon an eminence lying on the roadside of national progress, and sees march in their order before him the nations of the world, few things are at once more striking and more melancholy than the studied contempt of every phase for its past and its future.

The tribe-stage, before which we refuse to recognise a past, scorns its future, the agriculturist. The German warrior of the first century A.D. and the Tartars of the twelfth century considered agriculture enervating and ignoble, the resource of cowards, who, with sweat obtained what brave men would obtain by valour. The old chiefs among the North American Indians look with scorn upon the digger condemned to reside in one place and to feed upon the top of a weed.* The roving, marauding aristo-

* "The Tartar accustomed to roam over extensive plains, and to subsist on the product of his herds, imprecates upon his enemy, as the greatest of all curses, that he may be condemned to reside in one place,

cracies of Italy, in the middle ages, scorned the Burgundians as people who were so far settled as to live in burghs (villages) and earn a livelihood by handicrafts.* The tribesman passes before us and is gone, the settled population which succeeds him despise him as a bandit and a pirate, who, unfit himself for the comforts and respectability of life, would prevent every one else from enjoying them.

The sympathies of the agriculturist are still less benignant towards his future, the trader. Not merely is the man disliked, if settled among an agricultural population, as the trading Germans are disliked in Russia, as the Jews were disliked throughout Europe in the middle ages, because traders among agriculturists are penurious, inhospitable, and seem ever anxious to obtain an advantage over those with whom they have intercourse; but the agricultural nation, as a body, also despises and even hates what is its own future—a commercial nation. The Tyrians were despised and hated by the Jews, not then commercial. The Phœnician merchants—the same Tyrians, or akin to them—were excluded from Egypt, and were despised by the early non-commercial Greeks. Carthage was abhorred by the Romans. The Venetians were insulted by all the monarchs who dared to do so, and the

and to be nourished with the top of a weed. The rude Americans, fond of their own pursuits, and satisfied with their own lot, are equally unable to comprehend the intention or utility of the various accommodations which in more polished society are deemed essential to the comfort of life. Far from complaining of their own situation, or viewing that of men in a more improved state with admiration or envy, they regard themselves as the standard of excellence, as beings the best entitled as well as the most perfectly qualified to enjoy real happiness. Unaccustomed to any restraint upon their will or their actions, they behold with amazement the inequality of rank, and the subordination which take place in civilised life, and consider the voluntary submission of one man to another as a renunciation, no less base than unaccountable, of the first distinction of humanity."—*Robertson's America*, ii. 236.

* Gallenga, *Hist. of Piedmont*, i. 129.

league of Cambray between Louis XII. and the Emperor Maximilian against the Venetians was apparently brought about entirely by the jealousy and contempt of military and agricultural people for the cunning traders, who, when all the rest of Christendom was united against the Turk, supplied him with arms and food, indifferent, said Helian the ambassador of Louis XII., to anything but their gain. So, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Dutch were despised and detested by all surrounding potentates. Louis XIV. induced to join him against the Dutch, Charles II., the Archbishop of Cologne, and Maximilian of Bavaria, none of them having any ground of complaint against the Dutch. England too, though no ally of Louis, hated the Dutch with perhaps a more hearty hatred. England, as far as it is more commercial than the nations of the Continent of Europe, is at this moment despised and disliked by them; and itself despises America for its still greater affection to dollars. Every one of these commercial nations has been told by those which were not commercial that it was destitute of honour, and that it went about among the nations of the world like the miser in Horace—

: “*Populus me sibilat; at mihi plaudo*
Ipse domi, simul ac nummos contemplor in arcâ.”

The Greeks, from Homer downwards, represent the Phœnician as a rascal; the Romans had a proverb on *Punica Fides*. The word “Dutchman,” when Holland was commercial and England but little so, denoted in England everything that was vile. “Perfidious Albion” is a combination of words not unknown on the Continent of Europe, and the Americans are frequently told, with many expletives, that they are a nation of swindlers.

The sentiment of nations in their early development towards commercial states, is not merely contempt, though that is large, but likewise a deadly hatred, produced by the pride of the commercial nations founded on wealth, which, as the others think, is gained by despicable and

often dishonest means, and accompanied by a character apparently illiberal, selfish, and untrustworthy.

The commercial nations, in their turn, look back upon their own past — the present of their antagonist — as a time of ignorant rusticity, when all their subtle inventions and ingenious shifts, which are so many proofs of the superiority of their own age to that of their forefathers, were unknown, and regard the power of devising and inventing, not possessed or not practised by the agricultural nations, as a proof of the superiority of nations in the commercial stage to the nations in an earlier stage.

Inasmuch as the commercial age is very nearly simultaneous with the acme, commerce being a necessary ingredient in the acme, this contempt of the past has very much to be said in its defence, though there are merits and virtues in an agricultural age which are wanting in the more pushing and boasting age of business.

The commercial nation likewise despises, I dare hardly say its future, out of respect for the precept "Absit omen," but rather the state of these nations which have been but remain no longer commercial. The present condition of Greece, of Venice, of Tuscany, of Holland, and of Spain, does not excite the admiration of the nations of the world now commercial, who are apt to class them with others in the stage of stagnant despotism, and to commit them to a common contempt.

The centralised despotism, where everything is kindly provided by a paternal government whose members are chosen by merit, looks with contempt on the hereditary incapacity which aristocracy and constitutional government put into power, and on the inflated shopkeepers whom a plutocracy honours, while it tells you that a manufacturing and commercial nation has no care for the happiness of the people, but looks upon them as machines for making money, and that the whole system of affairs in a constitutional country is a mass of contradictory anomalies, a compromise in which there is no truth ; those

who are called rulers, not being rulers ; those who are called subjects, not being subjects ; and every one being compelled to do evil, or to submit to have evil done to him, out of regard for the folly and the prejudices of others.

These centralised despotisms, when they have existed sufficiently long, become like the Chinese and the Greeks, utterly effete and unwarlike, and incur the contempt of those who come upon their land to form its future, in the one case the Tartars, in the other the French* and the Turks.

But enough of this contempt. In the course of national progress, there run intermixed two currents ; the one of good, the other of evil,—and if you, at any point, cast two pairs of lock-gates at a little interval across the stream and analyse the waters you enclose, there will be good in each section of the current that can be found in no other section, so there will be likewise a form of evil unknown higher or lower in the stream. Therefore, to the ready declamator who preaches to the conceit of his own little section, there is the theme of good peculiar to it, whereon he may prelect as honestly as a witness who tells the truth, but not the whole truth ; and to the cynic's analysis lies exposed that of evil which was not before and will not be hereafter.

Contempt I have said shows a want of development in the mind of the sympathies liable to be affected by the thing contemned. Those who will justify their contempt will say that they would rather be without sympathies with the thing contemned—for example, Englishmen will say that they would rather be without the feelings that lead man to sympathise with a centralised despotism, and that if this is to be narrow-minded, they prefer being narrow-minded.

And so it happens, that through the long history of a

* Montesquieu, *Grand. et Décad.* xxiii.

progressive nation, which is but a series of decaying and advancing systems, there rises from the closet of the studious, from the saloons of the great, from the halls of the representatives, a continued strain, blended of the funeral chaunt for the old systems and the *Te Deum* for the new. Throughout the long history of our country the *De Profundis* has been solemnly chaunted for the decay of systems for ever gone ; and it is now chaunted for the departure of other systems and orders of living once new, whose birth and growth, evoking the *Te Deums* of their admirers, evoked likewise the mourning strain of those who saw in novelty decay. They whose apartments in the house are already built and furnished will ever be annoyed—according to the measure of their selfishness—with the noisy works of the new incomers into the national mansion, knocking up new fabrics, building upon ancient pleasure-grounds ; and the more will they be annoyed if alterations are proposed which darken their ancient lights, invade their privacy, or curtail their space : while, on the other hand, the young energy of the nation, and each statesman aspiring to leave the country more richly developed than he found it, will help, the one by its enduring toil, the other by his directing skill, to the edification of many new mansions in their father's house ; and though the old portions were perhaps better for their inmates without these new adjuncts, it were strange if the splendour and glory of the whole fabric be not the greater by reason of the new workers.

But if you listen to the chaunt of the mourners, England has been declining since the days of Elizabeth, each new and important step or incident in its progress, each mark of transition to a new phase of development, being a proof of decay. The dethronement of Charles I., the expulsion of the Stuarts, the independence of the United States, the Roman Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bill, the relief of the Jews,—are they not all

signs of our decline? The lover of the earlier stage of national existence, when a monarchy and feudal aristocracy have it all their own way, or even those who favour the exclusive power of either of these bodies, would indeed say so. The Comte de Boulainvilliers, Fénelon, and d'Argenson, would all agree that England has steadily been declining for the last two centuries, while every change that provokes the Cassandra within them, calls forth loud pæans of joy from the party which sees realised its fond anticipations. Those who believe no nation to be great, unless it has great authors, may perhaps lament the present as compared with the past. They who would rather see a purely agricultural people, with few towns and small extent of manufactures, must rise every morning with a sadder opinion of their country; they, on the contrary, who believe that a large town population well educated and of much mental refinement is a sound basis of a national prosperity, will look with complacency on the present, and with well-founded hopes for a still more prosperous future; they who acknowledge as marks of advancing nations an improving school of arts, both of the fine arts and the mechanical arts, an increasing desire for reading, a more extended love of music, a more active regard for sanitary arrangements, greater beauty in the public buildings and street architecture of our towns, more munificent public charities, a greater respect for the independence and social status of the industrial and skilful artisan; they whose sympathies, when they read history, are most enlisted by the rising and energetic cities, full of an enterprising and freedom-loving people, and adorned with the palaces of opulent merchants; they who, disgusted with the barbarism of war, the intrigues of courts, or the nepotism of aristocracies, love to linger over the early rise of the Hanse Towns, the Dutch towns, and still more the Italian, will not judge meanly of the age in which they live, or talk darkly of decline in England, when it rejoices them to

think that their native country is quickly being studded with these seats of enterprise and opulence, still perhaps somewhat rude and ungainly, but soon to acquire the elegance, the love of art, the polish, and something, let us hope, of that exquisite grace that belonged to the Grecian and Italian republics in their best days.

The spectator, who takes what I humbly conceive to be the true view of English civilisation, will, while he acknowledges that the constitutional balance is altered by the decline of some elements, and the elevation of others, congratulate himself to think that it is not destroyed, but bids fair to give to the history of the world an unexampled and glorious chapter, which shall show how the elements of monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, and plutocracy, uncombined before, fused well and happily on English ground, and how the last of them, so far from disturbing the peace of the state in which it has arisen a new ingredient, improved the general result of English civilisation, by adding to it those qualities and arts that have always attended plutocracy, when not a constitutional element, but a form of social order unchecked by any other but the democratic.

The immediate future of England will evidently present a state of society which has never before been realised in any country, because never before have all the social elements now present and likely for some time to become or to remain present here met at one period in any national development. But it will bear most resemblance to the stage of mingled plutocracy and democracy; and this has always been the stage in which rhetoricians have preferred to describe a nation. For though it may not always be the stage in which there is most of solid greatness, it is the most splendid period of a nation's existence. The national literature has then just received its finishing touches, and the glory that it has brought remains long after it has itself left the horizon, and the magnificence and excellence of the

arts, both the fine and the mechanical, then daily increase, while commerce and arms spread fame, respect, and fear through the greater portion of the habitable globe.

In these chapters the persons who lament the systems actually passing away from England, may, perhaps, find descriptions of the good belonging to those systems, and the evil belonging to the new systems, but so also will the advocates of those new systems find described their good, and the evil of the passing systems to which they are opposed. But the preacher who preaches from the oracles of Cassandra and forecasts the dark issue that England is rapidly pursuing its path to the valley of abominations, will not, I trust, find here arguments to support him. It may be well for the recluse, in the solitude of his study, to exercise his judgment in considering whether his country is rising or declining; it may be well for a scornful historian to paint for future ages the vices of his own, and compare with them all the virtues of an ideal past; it may be well for the orator sometimes to arouse his audience by comparison of the noble examples among our forefathers; but it is not well, nay, I hold it almost criminal, for a person in public life, to give way to an opinion that his nation is declining, its character degenerating, its honour passing away. The very expression of that opinion tends to make it true. He who believes in an irresistible corruption has gone more than half way towards yielding to it himself. Rather let the statesman, drawing his own inspiration, and forming his own character from the purest times, and the greatest examples of his country, disbelieve that those among whom he lives are worse, and if he were wrong in that supposition at first, others would not be wrong, for they would find in him a living refutation of the idea of a universal degeneracy. One example will encourage many another, and may in the end form the general tone of the nation, and therefore it is the most sacred duty of an English statesman to hope well of his

country, and to act as if his hopes were justified, for so they will be justified.

For national decay comes not upon an honourable people. This is the epitaph inscribed on the tomb of every people which has been great in history:—"It perished because its character was corrupt." Large towns have been described as the splendid sepulchres that nations build unto themselves, but they become sepulchres only when they cease to be the habitations of honourable men; and we who now wander through the silent and grass-grown capitals, where lie buried the fair fame and energy of some of the noblest nations of European history, can find in the tricky-mindiness of the degenerate citizens — albeit "well-educated and refined" — who lurk in ignominy in their desolate halls and live in the corners of their ancestral palaces, the true and infallible cause of national decay. If any one complains of this sad, inglorious end of national histories, and doubts whether it can be according to the benevolent scheme of Providence that the nations should exhaust themselves like an Egyptian tyrant in building but a tomb, I answer him in the words of Rogers —

"The reward
Is in the race we run, not in the prize."

THE END.

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